

# Employer Programme for Hospitality and Tourism



In partnership we shape the future  
of Hospitality and Tourism

## European Needs Analysis Report

Partner: **MMC**

### Intellectual Output 1: Common European Needs Analysis

Coordinator:



Partners:



**TEI Κρήτης**  
Τεχνολογικό Εκπαιδευτικό Ίδρυμα Κρήτης



**documenta**  
INSTITUTO EUROPEO  
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FORMACIÓN Y EL DESARROLLO



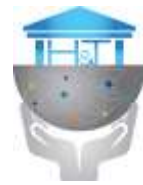
**Mediterranean  
Management Centre**



**Erasmus+**

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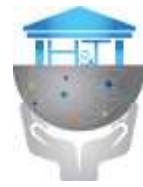


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## Abbreviations

**CY:** Cyprus

**EPHT:** Employer Programme for Hospitality and Tourism

**FIN:** Finland

**GR:** Greece

**H&T:** Hospitality and Tourism

**HEI:** Higher Educational Institution

**HHIC:** Higher Hotel Institute of Cyprus

**TAMK:** Tampere University of Applied Sciences

**TEI:** Higher Technological Educational Institute of Crete



## Introduction

This research is a part of the project “Employer Programme for Hospitality and Tourism”. The project will provide a range of tools and solutions, aiming at the development of a strong and effective partnership. These tools and solutions include, among others:

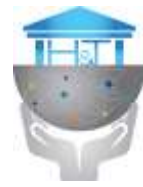
1. A thorough analysis of the needs of relevant stakeholders (Hospitality and Tourism businesses, tertiary level educational institutions, students, policy makers and opinion leaders) in the countries of the consortium. The analysis includes in-depth, mixed – methodology research (qualitative and quantitative).
2. A recommendations report that takes into consideration the needs identified by the countries of the consortium and what is currently available in Europe and internationally and based on that makes recommendations either to use existing practices, or to adapt practices that already exist according to the needs identified, or even to develop new innovative practices.
3. An operational manual that presents a systematic methodology for the development, installation and monitoring of a successful employer programme for the Hospitality and Tourism industry. This manual will be publicly available, therefore organisations, enterprises and educational institutions, not currently participating in the project, may use it to develop their own Employer Programme.

The development of the aforementioned tools and solutions require a solid, concrete and thorough analysis of the relevant needs in each partner country. This report is the fruit of an ambitious effort by project partners to conduct a mixed methods research, the results of which are being presented in this document in a comparative, critical and exhaustive manner.

The objectives, thus of this report are:

- ❖ To deeply understand the current situation in the three countries participating in the research (CY, GR and FIN), regarding employer engagement, relevant programmes, etc. in the H&T sector
- ❖ To identify the needs for an Employer Programme in the sector of Tourism and Hospitality in each of the three countries included in the research.
- ❖ To identify commonalities and differences between the countries





- ❖ To identify and elaborate on the understanding, desires and priorities that various stakeholders have concerning an Employer Programme in H&T



## Methodology & Sampling

This research was conducted in the period from November 2016 to February 2017. It was implemented in three phases and the methodology in terms of implementation, was rather sequential:

- First, the tools for the implementation of the focus groups such as interview guides, consent forms, as well as a document with clear instructions to facilitators were designed.
- Then the focus groups were implemented. One focus group per educational institution in partner countries (HCCI, TEI, TAMK) was conducted.
- The development of the structure & content of the semi-structured interviews as well as development of the questionnaire followed. The questions of the semi-structured interviews as well as of the questionnaires were informed by of a preliminary analysis of the results of the focus groups.
- Then, the semi-structured interviews as well as the surveys were implemented
- Finally, the results were analysed in each country and separate reports were produced for GR, CY and FIN

### Focus groups

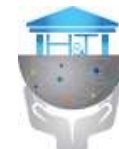
The following table presents the main details of the focus groups:

	GREECE	CYPRUS	FINLAND
Date:	17 November 2017	21 November 2017	14 November 2016
Place:	Technological Educational Institute (TEI) of Crete, Heraklion, Greece	Higher Hotel Institute, Nicosia, Cyprus	Tampere University of Applied Sciences, Tampere, Finland
Time	10.00 - 12.30	14:00 - 17:00	12:00 – 13:30
Number of participants:	12	14	8



Facilitator:	Mr. Georgios Apladas  Dr. Irimi Dimou  Dr.           Alexandros Apostolakis	Dr Evi Soteriou	Pirkko Timonen
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*Table 1: Focus groups details*



In general, in all countries, an effort was made to achieve an equal representation of all types of stakeholders, i.e. industry representatives, tertiary level institutions personnel, students and graduates. In addition, representativeness was achieved in terms of gender. As seen in the following table and graph, this was largely achieved.

Moreover, further criteria for choosing the participants were different backgrounds in the H&T industry and different positions (managers, employees and owners). Regarding educational Institutions, faculty members and administrative personnel were chosen from different educational institutions offering programmes in H&T disciplines. Finally, students and graduates of HEIs offering programmes in H&T were included in all three focus groups.

SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION IN TERMS OF GENDER AND STAKEHOLDER TYPE	GREECE	CYPRUS	FINLAND	TOTAL	TOTAL %
N (total number of participants)	12	14	8	34	100
Male	6	7	2	15	44
Female	6	7	6	19	56
Employed in the H&T sector as a manager	3	5	1	9	26
Employed in the H&T sector as an employee	2	3	0	5	14
Owner of a H&T enterprise	0	1	1	2	6
TOTAL INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES	5	9	2	16	47
Employed in a H&T institution as faculty	2	2	3	7	20
Employed in a H&T institution as administrative personnel	2	1	0	3	9
Student in a H&T academic institution	3	2	3	8	24
TOTAL HEI REPRESENTATIVES	7	5	6	18	53

Table 2: Sample distribution (focus groups) in terms of gender and occupation

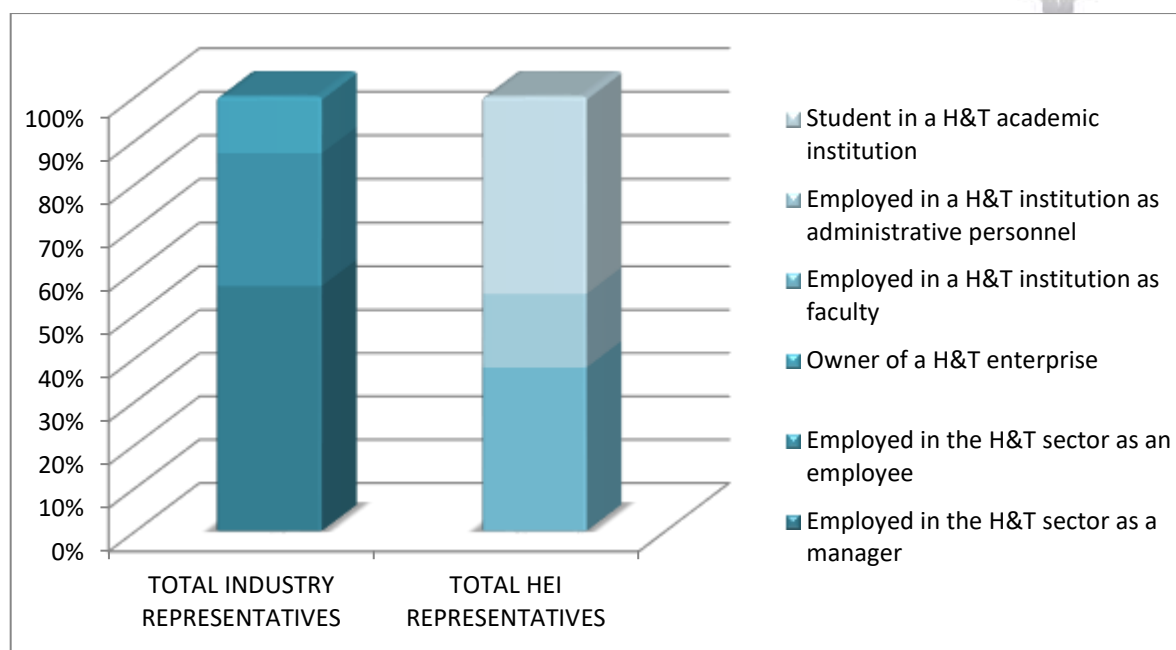
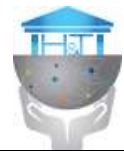


Figure 1: Sample distribution (focus groups) in terms of occupation

### Semi-structured interviews

SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION IN TERMS OF GENDER AND STAKEHOLDER TYPE	GREECE	CYPRUS	FINLAND	TOTAL	TOTAL %
N (total number of participants)	12	14	8	34	100
Male	6	9	2	15	44
Female	6	1	6	19	56
Employed in the H&T sector as a manager	3	4	1	9	26
Employed in the H&T sector as an employee	2	0	0	5	14
Owner of a H&T enterprise	0	1	1	2	6
<b>TOTAL INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>47</b>
Employed in a H&T institution as	2	2	3	7	20



faculty					
Employed in a H&T institution as administrative personnel	2	1	0	3	9
Student in a H&T academic institution	3	2	3	8	24
<b>TOTAL HEI REPRESENTATIVES</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>53</b>

*Table 3: Sample distribution (interviews) in terms of gender and occupation*

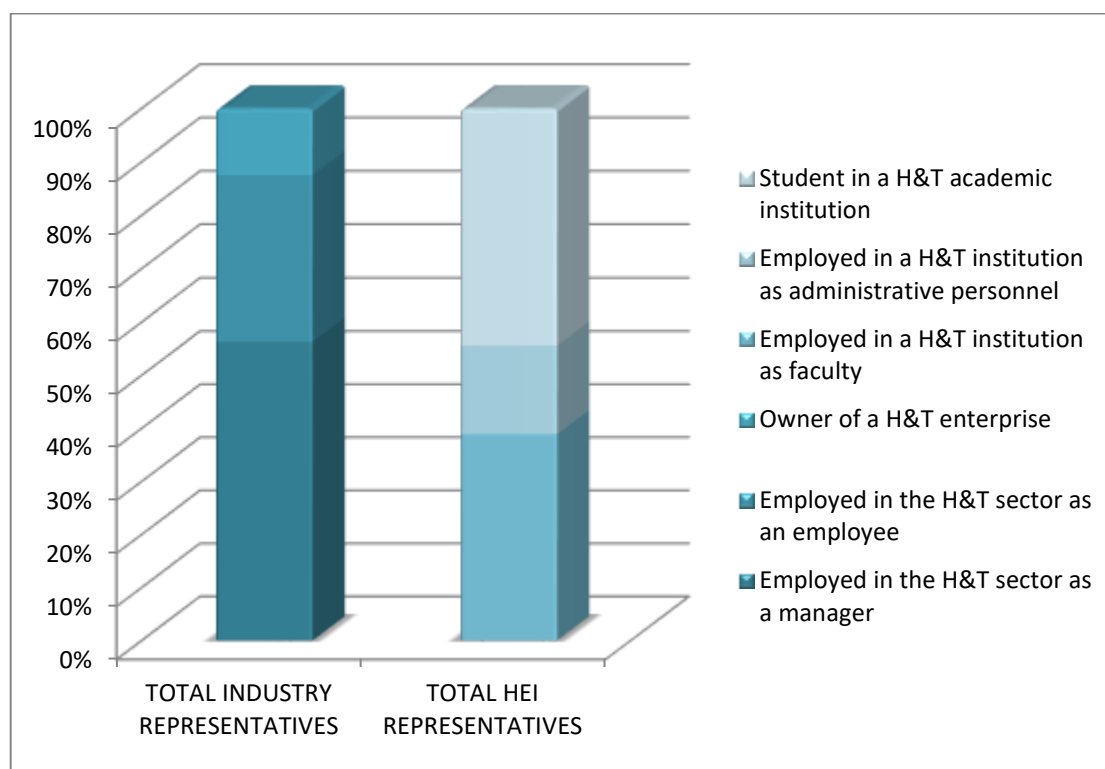


Figure 2: Sample distribution (interviews) in terms of occupation

## Surveys

SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION IN TERMS OF GENDER AND STAKEHOLDER TYPE	CYPRUS	GREECE	FINLAND	TOTAL	TOTAL %
N (total number of participants)	102	120	99	321	100
Employed in the H&T sector as a manager	28	22	31	81	25
Employed in the H&T sector as an employee	19	15	16	50	16
Owner of a H&T enterprise	2	16	1	19	6
<b>TOTAL INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>47</b>
Employed in a H&T institution as	14	33	19	66	21



faculty					
Employed in a H&T institution as administrative personnel	6	12	1	19	6
Student in a H&T academic institution	31	22	31	84	26
<b>TOTAL HEI REPRESENTATIVES</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>53</b>
Other	2	-	-		0.6

*Table 4: Sample distribution (surveys) in terms of gender and occupation*



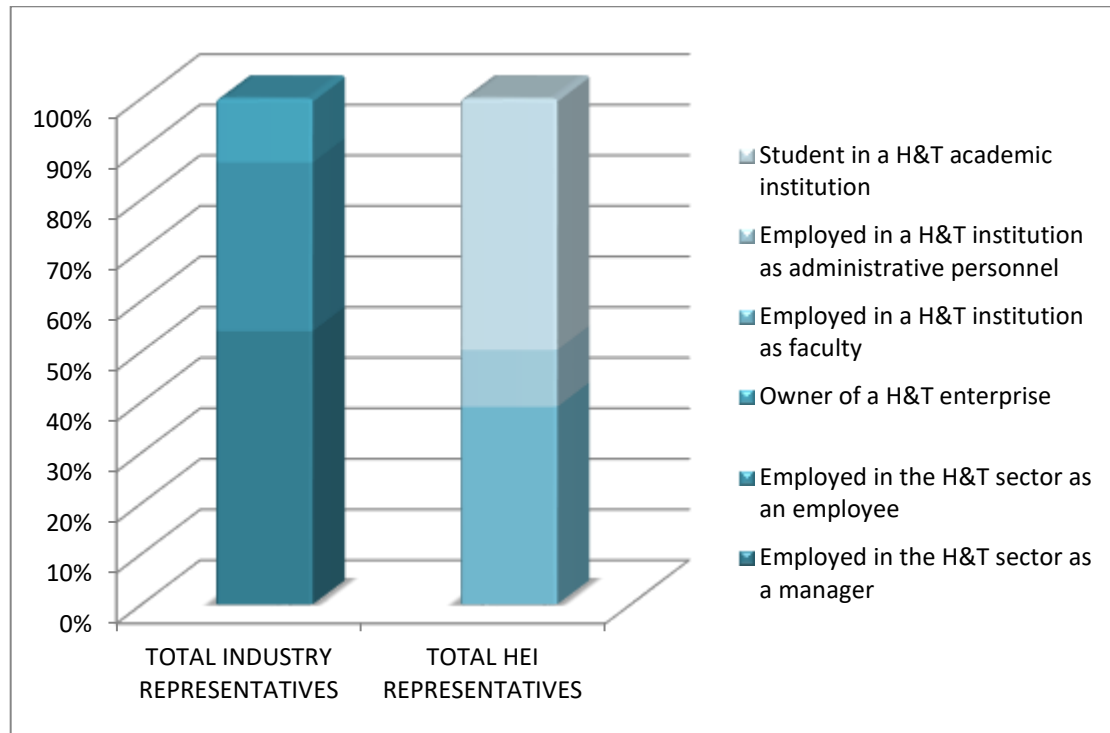


Figure 3: Sample distribution (surveys) in terms of occupation



## 1. Contextual Analysis

In this section, we are focusing on the existing situation in the partner countries, in other words the current forms of collaboration between the H&T industry and HEIs offering programmes in H&T, as well as the stances and attitudes of relevant stakeholders in relation to collaboration. Moreover, the effectiveness of these forms of collaboration is assessed and evaluated, as the main objective of this document is to shed light on the needs of various stakeholders in the sector for an effective employer programme that will take into due consideration existing good practices in order to establish successful partnerships. Indeed, the research delivered diverse results, ranging from non-successful practices and programmes to highly successful ones.

### Stances and Attitudes towards the current levels of cooperation

In this first section, the stances and attitudes of the research participants are recorded separately for each country, for the reader to acquire a general picture of how relevant stakeholders in Cyprus, Greece and Finland perceive the current situation as well as the needs for the establishment of an effective employer programme. These stances and attitudes are presented in the table below. The average for each reply is based on a Likert scale measuring the agreement or disagreement with each statement (**1= I STRONGLY AGREE AND 4 = I STRONGLY DISAGREE**):

STATEMENT	CYPRUS AVERAGE	GREECE AVERAGE	FINLAND AVERAGE
a. Tertiary Level Educational Institutions should engage more with the industry	1,9	1,4	1,6
b. Industry representatives should be involved in the curricula planning process	2,2	1,9	1,8
c. Industry representatives should be involved in the curricula delivery process	2,1	1,9	2
d. Tertiary Level Educational Institutions and businesses should seek new strategic partnerships	2	1,5	1,5
e. Industry professionals can bring value-added knowledge and hands-on experience to the	1,8	1,5	1,4



classroom			
f. Industry professionals are not suitably qualified to teach at a university level	2,7	2,6	2,9
g. Current H&T educational institutions' curricula reflect workplace knowledge	2,3	2,3	2,2
h. H&T educational institutions' graduates are not well prepared for successfully joining the workforce	2,5	2,3	2,7
i. Employer engagement in the H&T educational process is a priority for making curricula more relevant & competitive	2	1,9	1,8

*Table 5: Stances and attitudes towards current level of cooperation and perceived needs*

From the table, it is made clear that the need for new strategic partnerships, the necessity for employer engagement and the need to enrich curricula and connection to the industry is great. Most of the respondents feel that an employer programme is needed.

In detail, in questions a. to e. the average number for Cyprus is slightly higher than in the other two countries, meaning that in Cyprus the respondents are more hesitant when it comes to involvement of the industry in higher education affairs and in establishing partnerships. In the rest of the questions, the average scores in all three countries are very close to each other and in most cases respondents slightly lean to agreeing.

After this overall, general depiction of agreement/disagreement with the statements, what follows is a more elaborate analysis of the results that emerged in the three countries in a comparative manner, including insights concerning the responses provided by different stakeholder categories.

STATEMENTS	FINLAND AVERAGE			GREECE AVERAGE			CYPRUS AVERAGE		
	INDUSTRY REP	HEIS REP	STUDENTS	INDUSTRY REP	HEIS REP	STUDENTS	INDUSTRY REP	HEIS REP	STUDENTS
a. Tertiary Level Educational Institutions should engage more with	1,6	1,7	1,7	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,9	2	2,1



the industry									
b. Industry representatives should be involved in the curricula planning process	1,9	1,8	1,7	1,8	1,9	1,9	2,1	2,2	2,4
c. Industry representatives should be involved in the curricula delivery process	2,1	2	1,9	1,9	2	1,9	2,1	2,1	2,3
d. Tertiary Level Educational Institutions and businesses should seek new strategic partnerships	1,6	1,6	1,6	1,5	1,6	1,6	2	2	2,2
e. Industry professionals can bring value-added knowledge and hands-on experience to the classroom	1,5	1,5	1,4	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,8	1,8	2
f. Industry professionals are not suitably qualified to teach at a university level	2,7	3	3	2,7	2,7	2,7	2,7	2,7	2,7
g. Current H&T educational institutions' curricula reflect workplace knowledge	2	2,2	2,3	2,4	2,4	2,4	2,4	2,4	2,6
h. H&T educational institutions' graduates are not well prepared for successfully joining the workforce	2,7	2,3	2,8	2,3	2,3	2,3	2,6	2,6	2,5
i. Employer engagement in the H&T educational process is a priority for making curricula more relevant & competitive	1,8	1,9	1,9	1,9	2	2	2	2	2,2

The following graphs illuminate the level of agreement or disagreement with the statements by type of stakeholder in each country.

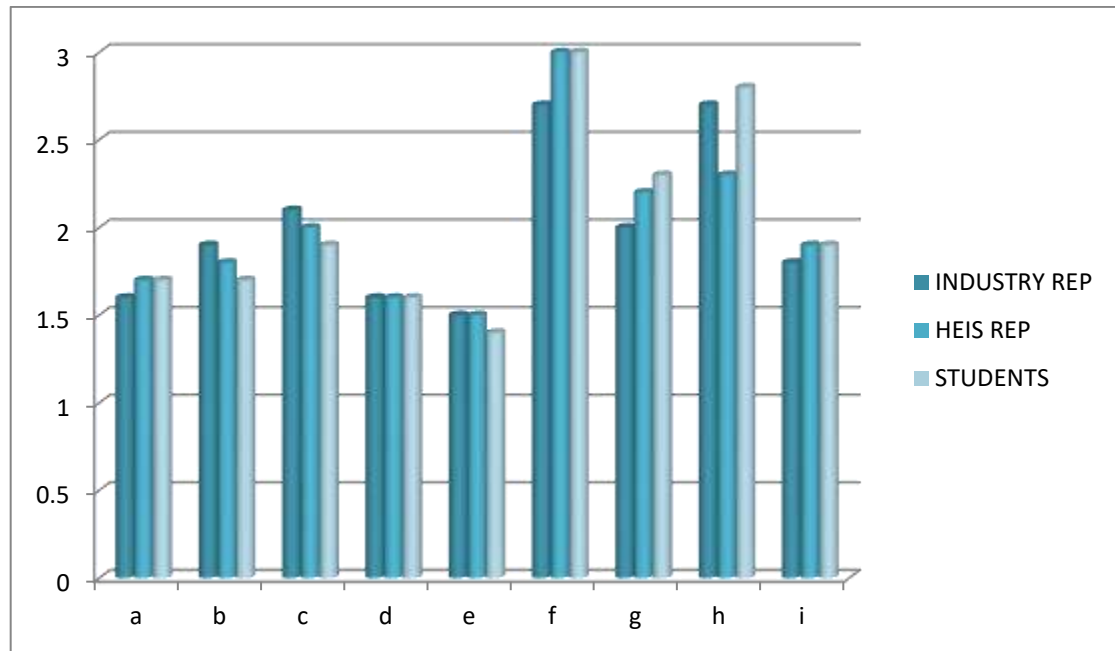


Figure 4: agreement or disagreement with the statements by type of stakeholder in FINLAND

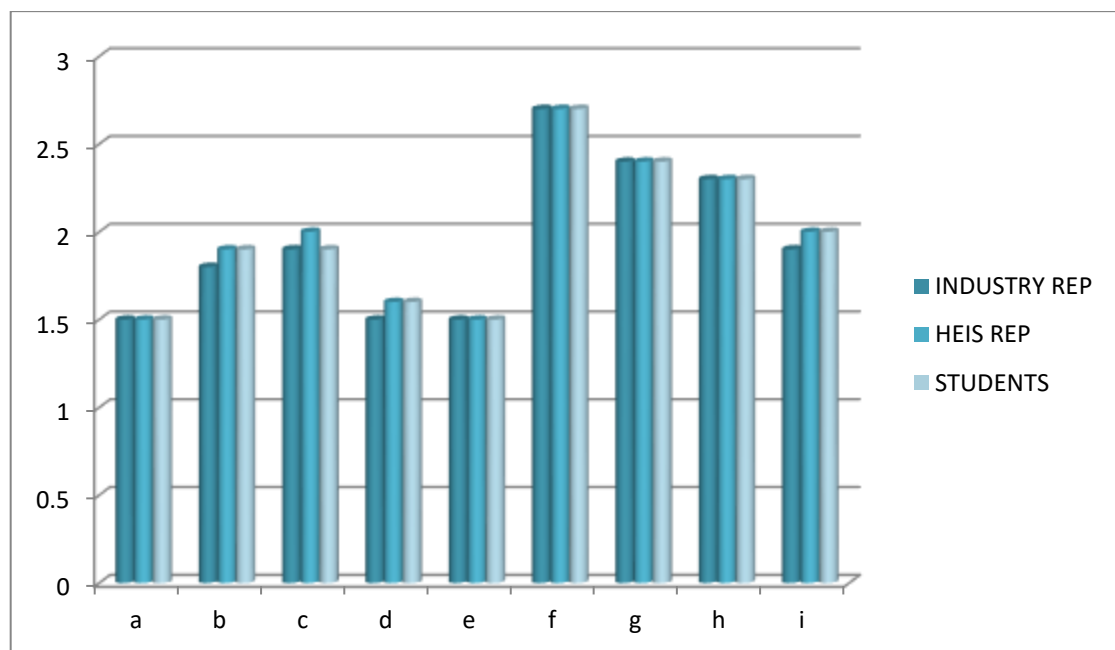


Figure 5: agreement or disagreement with the statements by type of stakeholder in GREECE

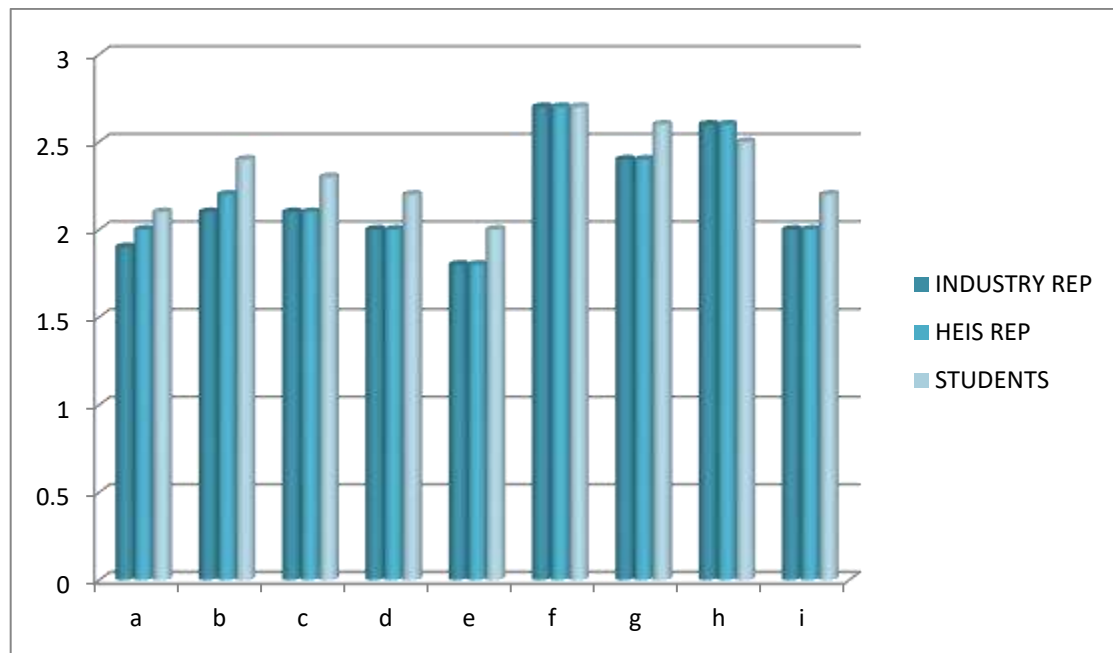


Figure 6: agreement or disagreement with the statements by type of stakeholder in CYPRUS

The first important point highlighted by the graphs of each country, is that stakeholders do not seem to disagree. In other words, representatives of the industry, HEIs and students are responding in a uniform manner. Some more conclusion from the responses of the participants, include:

1. There seems to be a need for further involvement of the industry in H&T education
2. The comparison between the countries (as illustrated by the similar shapes of the charts) shows that needs, stances and attitudes may be combined in a common program, as there is no significant divergence between responses in Greece, Cyprus and Finland



## Existing cooperation between HEIs offering H&T programmes and the H&T industry

EXISTING COOPERATION	CYPRUS	GREECE	FINLAND
There is cooperation	67	59	53
There is no cooperation	28	64	4
I do not know	5	7	43

Table 6: Existing cooperation

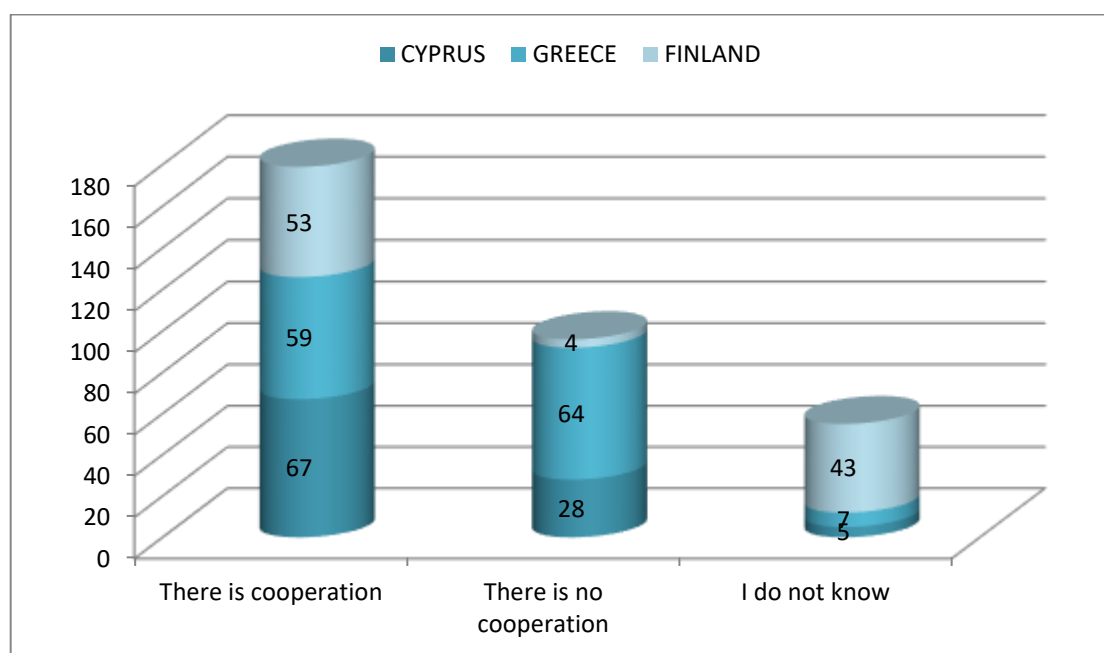


Figure 7: Comparative graph: Existing cooperation in GR, FIN, CY

As seen in table 6, the majority of the respondents in all countries believe there is cooperation. Moreover, while the lowest percentage was recorded in Finland, we have to consider that only 4 of the respondents from Finland stated that there is no cooperation, while the corresponding percentages in Greece and Cyprus are substantially higher. Nevertheless, the percentages of those who stated that there is cooperation are close between the countries.



In a comparative light, as shown in Fig. 7, the situation in the three countries is not very different, with only the exception of Finland, where merely 4 respondents stated that there is no cooperation, while this could be explained by the large number of respondents from Finland who do not know whether there is cooperation or not.

A detailed examination of the forms that existing cooperation undertakes was also included in the research, and it is commented in the following paragraphs. Table 7 makes an overall assessment of the results in all countries:

EXISTING COOPERATION IS BASED ON <sup>1</sup> :	CYPRUS	GREECE	FINLAND
Internships	43	29	69
Shadowing	6	3	10
Apprenticeships	8	8	23
Practical exercise	50	86	90
Placements for graduates	21	23	25
Other	1	-	4

*Table 7: Existing cooperation*

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the respondents in this question had the opportunity to choose more than one answers, thus the sum of the percentages is higher than 100



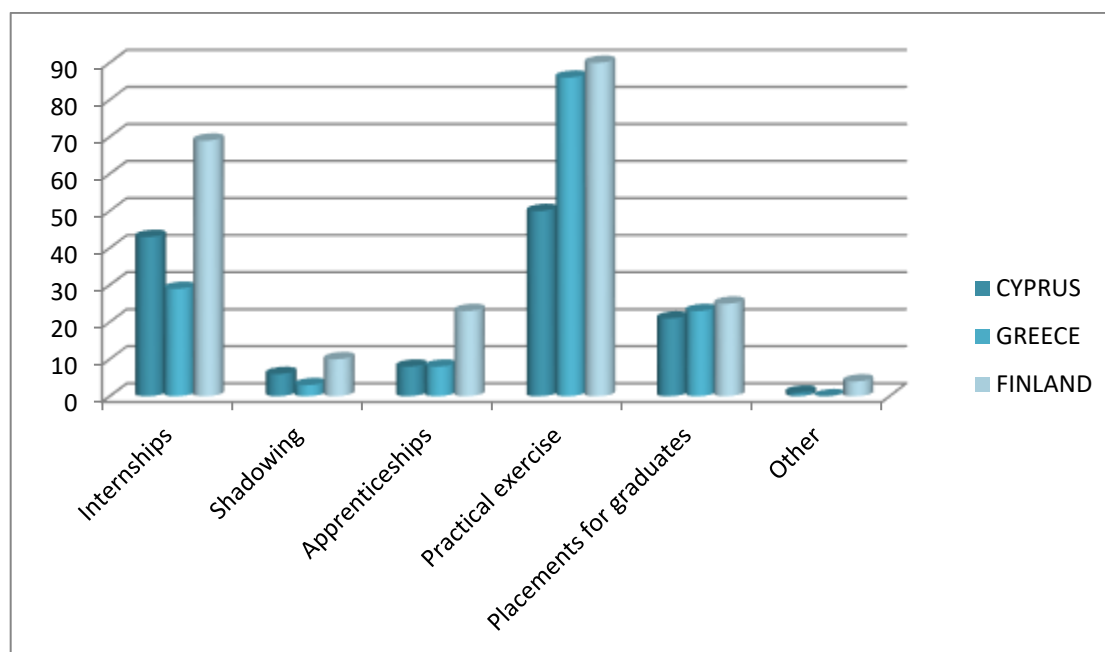


Figure 8: Comparative graph: Forms of existing cooperation in GR, FIN, CY

Below, the results of the survey are enriched with data that emerged during the qualitative research, and is presented in more detail for each country.

In Cyprus, there is some cooperation between educational institutions and employers, mainly focused on internships. Ten out of ten interviewees believe that there is such cooperation, while 67% stated the same in the survey.

Various and diverse forms of cooperation were listed by participants in the interviews and focus group in Cyprus, including:

- Discussion fora between academics and industry leaders organized by some universities
- Guest lecturer programmes
- Career days offered by some institutions enabling students to present their CVs to employers and discuss prospects of future employment
- Erasmus+ mobilities
- Summer internships and summer industrial placements

As seen in table 7, the most common forms of cooperation in Cyprus, according to the results of the survey, are based on internships (43 responses, 33%) and practical exercise (50 responses, 39%).



In Greece, the results demonstrate a similar situation: In the question regarding whether respondents know of any existing programmes of cooperation between H&T academia and professionals in the tourism and hospitality sector, the majority of respondents of the survey (approximately 59%) replied positively. A small minority (6.7%) replied in a definitive negative fashion and approximately one third of respondents (34.2%) mentioned that they were not sure. The above-mentioned information is depicted in the table presented earlier.

The forms that the current cooperation undertakes in Greece, according to our participants in both the qualitative (focus group – interviews) and the quantitative parts of the research, include:

- Internship programmes
- The academics participated in this research referred to the efforts of some research units in Greek universities to investigate holistically the H&T sector. Some of these research projects implemented in cooperation with H&T employers.
- A partnership program between the University of Macedonia and the Costa Navarino Hotel, which funds MSc students in a postgraduate H&T program.
- The existence of a state funded programme for the lifelong learning activities of H&T personnel through universities, was also mentioned.
- Scholarships awarded by certain H&T firms.

In Finland on the other hand, the situation is different, as different types of collaboration between TAMK and employers were recorded:

- Internships
- Practical exercise
- Placements of graduates
- Apprenticeships
- Students' organizations establish contracts with different companies, get financial support and establish collaboration with companies of different business areas.
- Tampereen Voimia is educating many of its supervisors and staff.
- Students in blended learning programmes are doing small projects for companies.
- A private educational organization in Crete has introduced a cooperation project with hospitality employers in which each student is being "assigned" to a specific employer from the first year of his/her study. Employers provide internship positions



for the students they are "responsible for" and students conduct project assignments, case studies and dissertations that are related to issues relevant to their "employer".

- Lecturers from the H&T sector companies are teaching at the university.

TAMK, according to the participants in the qualitative research is an example of good cooperation that is multileveled.

Nevertheless, in the survey question whether there are current forms of cooperation between tertiary level educational institutions offering programmes in H&T and Employers in the industry, 52,5 % of the respondents replied positively, a score which is similar to those of Greece and Cyprus.

The big amount of answers "I do not know" – 43,4 % (43 respondents), demonstrates that even if there are cooperation programmes and support for such activities, they are not well known even to the relevant stakeholders who participated in the research.

According to those respondents who replied positively in the previous section, existing cooperation is based very strongly on the practical exercises (see figure 9, 90,4 % of the respondents). In Finnish higher education, there are usually different kinds of practical exercises, so the institutions and their students are used to cooperate with the industry from the very beginning of their studies.

The second most popular answer was internships (69,2 %). This was well expected, as all students in Finland conduct internships in companies of the H&T sector.

The placement for graduates (25%) and apprenticeship (23.1%) were the third and the fourth popular answers respectively.

In general, in all three countries, internships and practical exercise are the most common forms of cooperation between HEIs offering programmes in H&T and H&T enterprises. The fact that many relevant stakeholders who participated in the research, namely, representatives of the H&T industry, students and academics in H&T educational institutions are not aware of existing forms of cooperation (Cyprus - 5%, Greece - 7%, Finland - 43%), is a call for an employer programme that will be visible and will raise awareness among those stakeholders who will in turn be able to make the most of it. As seen on table 7, in all countries more "traditional" and tested through the years forms of collaboration are



preferred. The most popular responses by a great margin were Internships and Practical Exercise. As we noticed often in the course of the research these two forms tend to be conflated and we concluded that essentially they might mean the same thing to our respondents and relevant stakeholders in general. Hence, in this case we can say that respondents recognise as the sole popular form of collaboration the practical exercise, which, as shown in the qualitative part of the research is mandatory, as a part of the curriculum in most HEIs offering H&T programmes.

## Effectiveness of cooperation

In the previous sub section, the level and the different forms of cooperation between H&T HEIs and the H&T industry were traced and explained. In this sub section though, we will attempt to identify and explain the effectiveness. This is one of the most crucial tasks of the EPHT partnership, as we aspire to establish a successful, effective and efficient employer programme, based on the needs identified through this research. The following table illustrates the perceived effectiveness of current cooperation on a scale from one to ten, where one meant “not effective at all” and ten “very effective”.

	FINLAND AVERAGE			GREECE AVERAGE			CYPRUS AVERAGE		
	INDUSTRY REP	HEIS REP	STUDENTS	INDUSTRY REP	HEIS REP	STUDENTS	INDUSTRY REP	HEIS REP	STUDENTS
<b>EFFECTIVENESS OF COOPERATION</b>	7.2	7	7	6.6	6.4	6.6	6.8	6.7	6.7

*Table 8: Effectiveness of cooperation*

After looking at the table, one realises that in most countries, stakeholders are moderately satisfied, while there is a noteworthy upwards difference in Finland, where respondents are happier with the effectiveness of the cooperation more than in Greece and Cyprus. The lowest scores were recorder in Greece and the lowest of those belongs to HEIs representatives (6,4 average).

The following graph makes it clearer that industry representatives are in general much more satisfied with the effectiveness of the cooperation and its current forms. This result nevertheless has to be assessed and evaluated with caution, as one of the limitations and a



consequent inherent bias of this research was the fact that it was designed and most importantly implemented by the HEIs. This might have caused inhibition to employers and their representatives, who could have been restricted while responding for the sake of courtesy.

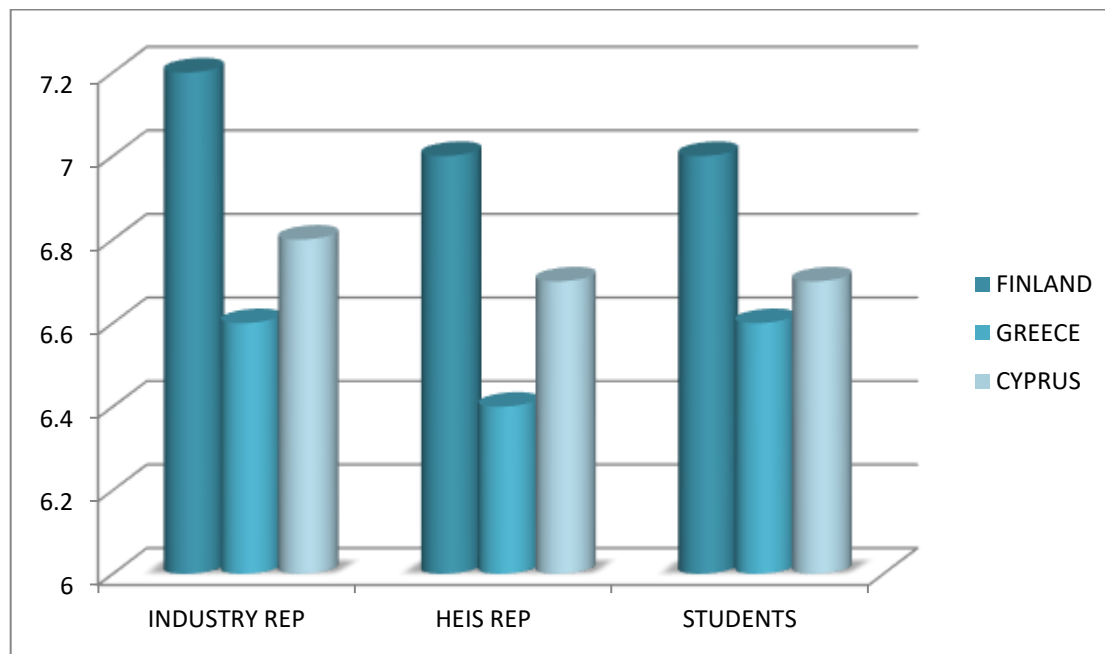


Figure 9: Comparative graph: Effectiveness of existing cooperation in GR, FIN, CY

Moreover, it is noteworthy that those who believed that the current level of cooperation is less efficient were academics and staff of HEIs.

Some insights from the interviews and focus groups, might shed more light in the issues under question. In **Cyprus**, some interviewees said that even though there is a close cooperation with a number of institutions, more effort should be made to reinforce this cooperation even further and that although there is cooperation it is not systematic.

In the qualitative part of the research it also emerged that for most participants placements and internships are effective and sometimes more useful than lectures. The suggestions that were mentioned for improving their effectiveness included longer periods of internships and practical exercise, as well as better planning in terms of financial sponsoring.

In the survey, the effectiveness of the cooperation was measured through a Likert scale ranging from 0 to 10, where 0 meant not effective at all and ten very effective. The majority of respondents rated it as above average.



It is interesting to note that academics and students were generally more critical of the current cooperation than industry representatives were, as seen on the graph above.

In **Greece**, the overwhelming majority of respondents (85.8% of responses) indicated practical exercise being the most popular form of co-operation between academia and the industry. This is followed, albeit not very closely, by internships and placements (29.2% and 23.3% respectively).

Based on these empirical findings, practical assessment and exercises seems to be, by far, the most popular means of co-operation between academia and the business world. On the other hand, shadowing (3.3%) and apprenticeship (7.5%) tend to be the least likely means of co-operation in the tourism and hospitality sector.

Furthermore, when the analysis considers a cross-tabulation analysis of the empirical results, according to respondents' employment status, the empirical results tend to confirm the abovementioned results. Hence, all employment categories tend to show a preference towards practical exercises as the chosen means of co-operation between academia and businesses in tourism and hospitality.

The survey questionnaire also enquired about respondents' perceptions regarding existing forms of co-operation in the H&T industry (question 6 in the survey questionnaire). Based on the information presented in figure 9, the majority of respondents hold a neutral opinion as far as the effectiveness of co-operation between academia and professionals in H&T sector. Overall, it appears that (collectively) 65% of respondents express a rather neutral opinion when it comes to the effectiveness of co-operation in the H&T sector. Overall, these results indicate that the great majority of respondents in the Greek sample expressed middle of the range opinions regarding the effectiveness of co-operation and collaboration between academic institutions and businesses in the H&T sector, identifying in that way the particular problems hindering collaborative efforts in the industry. In a way, these quantitative results confirm evidence derived from the qualitative research. In there, respondents identified positively as far as collaborative practices and initiatives (and actually stated that they want more of). However, at the same time they also mentioned a number of problems and issues that derail these efforts (e.g. communication issues).

On the other hand, approximately 31% of respondents expressed a positive or very positive opinion regarding co-operation levels in the H&T sector (responses 7 to 10 in the scale). On



the other hand, the negative responses (responses 1 to 3 in the scale) were particularly low in the sample (3.3% of the total). As far as these results are concerned, the empirical evidence also aligns with the qualitative results from earlier parts of the analysis. Thus, not many people expressed a direct dislike or problem with co-operation efforts in the H&T sector; they all realize the potential behind such efforts. Nevertheless, indirectly there are a few categories of individuals that may feel that existing methods and practices of co-operation within the industry do not serve them well. In the next few paragraphs, the analysis will examine variations in perceived effectiveness levels between different groups of respondents.

According to the evidence presented in figure 9, the overwhelming majority of responses in all three categories are in the middle of the range. Thus, both faculty members, industry representatives as well as students believe that co-operation within the H&T industry between academia and business has a long ground to cover yet. In particular, only about a quarter (26.7%) of students believe that co-operation levels between academia and the industry is very effective. Similarly, only about one in ten (9.5%) of faculty members share the same views. Even though responses are not particularly damning (negative opinions are kept at a very low level throughout the three groups), yet the fact that all three groups of respondents are not exactly convinced about the effectiveness of co-operation efforts implies that more effort should be allocated in all three categories of respondents. That said, policy makers and managers alike should device plans to keep everyone satisfied.

Although the value of placements and internships is considered indisputable, **academics** believe that the current form of internships programs is not effective enough. Many H&T employers do not respect the institution of internship and they consider students only as low cost workers for a specific period. In addition, interviewees said that the subjects of internships should target more in H&T firms' everyday problems, but also to the needed skills and knowledge that students should acquire through this process. For the latter, the involvement of professors in monitoring internships should be stronger.

On the other hand, **industry representatives** believe that internship programs are the most important part of students' studies. As academics, they recognize that the current form of internship programs is ineffective, but in contrast to academics, they indicate different reasons for this ineffectiveness. Although experts mentioned that same employers exploit students as a low cost labour force, they believe that the effectiveness of practical exercise



depends on the students and their interests to do further H&T studies or to be more competitive as H&T professionals. An interviewee propose the adaptation of Swiss internship model, in which students before their studies are forced to have internship experience of 4 weeks in H&T firms, in order to understand better how the sector they select is.

Finally, **students** believe that the internship institution is one of the most important part of their studies because it gives them the opportunity to work in a real environment and so getting the requested experience and knowledge. Students referred to two kind of obstacles in internships: the refusal of many H&T firms to accept internship students and the small salary given to students through this kind of internship programs.

In **Finland** one third of the respondents consider the cooperation to be in the level of grade 8 out of 10 and a significant number of respondents (23,5%) grade it on 7, which is also close to the average. Eight of the respondents consider that the cooperation is excellent (grade 9 – 10). In general, Finnish respondents believe that cooperation is more effective than what is believed in the other two countries. It has to be noted though that the average numbers of Finland demonstrate that there is still a long way to go as far as improvement is concerned.

### **Relevance of H&T educational institutions' curricula**

In this section the degree of relevance that the curricula of H&T HEIs demonstrate against the needs of the industry and workplace knowledge, is assessed. In other words, the participants were asked to respond on whether the curricula are adapted to the actual workplace in which the students will work, upon the completion of their studies and whether the graduates meet the needs of the industry.

In **Cyprus**, on a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 stood for 'I strongly agree' and 4 for 'I strongly disagree', in the statement: "Current H&T educational institutions' curricula reflect workplace knowledge", the responses of the total sample in the survey can be summarized as follows:

- 40% of the total sample, believe that current H&T educational institutions' curricula reflect workplace knowledge.





- Most of the respondents from all stakeholder categories (students, academics and industry representatives), neither “strongly agree” nor “strongly disagree”, but rather they “agree” or “disagree”.

These results are in line with the ways in which participants also evaluated the effectiveness of the cooperation, as described in the previous section, as there seems to be room for improvement.

In more detail, 43% of academics agree and 19% strongly agree that current H&T educational institutions’ curricula reflect workplace knowledge, while 33% disagree and 5% strongly disagree. Regarding industry representatives, 23% strongly agree and 42% agree that current H&T educational institutions’ curricula reflect workplace knowledge. On the contrary 25% disagree and 10% strongly disagree.

In **Greece**, regarding the degree in which current H&T educational institutions’ curricula reflect workplace knowledge, on the same scale as in Cyprus, the average response of the total sample was: 2.34. **This result demonstrates that current H&T educational institutions’ curricula could reflect workplace knowledge but there is a need for improvement.**

More than a half of Industry representatives agree with this statement (56%) but more importantly, there are 44% who disagree. this result is somewhat unexpected given that one would anticipate that industry representatives would be the ones most critical to current academic practices in the field. Students (76,2%) accept this statement but almost a quarter of them (23,8%) disagree.

According to Academics/staff’s responses no one strongly agrees but 69,4% of them agree with this statement. Again there are high negative response rates, since three out of ten (30,6%) believe that current H&T educational institutions’ curricula does not reflect workplace knowledge. this is a particularly interesting finding, especially coming from academics and faculty representatives. this point proves that even academics consider the strong need for updating of the H&T curriculum in Greece.

As far as **Finland** is concerned, 58.6% of the survey respondents agree with the statement that current H&T educational institutions’ curricula reflect workplace knowledge, while 11.1% strongly agree with the same statement. In other words, about 70% of the respondents think that the curricula do reflect to the workplace knowledge.



This result is in line with the results from **Greece** and **Cyprus** and demonstrates that even though there is relevance, there is still room for improvement towards this direction.

The degree that the students, upon the completion of their studies, meet the needs of the industry was assessed by reference to the degree of agreement to the following statement: “H&T educational institutions’ graduates are **not** well prepared for successfully joining the workforce”. 44 respondents, who represent the largest number of all the respondents disagree that H&T educational institutions’ graduates are not well prepared for successfully joining the workforce, in other words, they believe that the graduates are well prepared for this.

In **Greece**, for the same question, the average response of the total sample was: 2.33. This result demonstrates that there is a need for H&T educational institutions’ graduates to be more prepared for successfully joining the workforce.

More specifically, 66,6% of Industry representatives agree with this statement, whilst 33,4% disagree. The majority of the Students (61,9%) agree that graduates are not well prepared for successfully joining the workforce and the rest of them (38,1%) believe the contrary.

Academics/staff have a different opinion, as 61,1% disagree with this statement, 38,9% agree, and there is no one who strongly agrees with it. So the majority of Academics/staff support that H&T educational institutions’ graduates are well prepared for successfully joining the workforce.

In **Greece** in general, the participating academics believed that graduates of tertiary level from H&T educational institutions meet the basic needs of the industry. However, academics said that due to the rapid fluctuations in the industry (new trends in hotel policies, consumer preferences, pricing methods, etc.), graduates should constantly keep up with the current developments if they want to have a future in the industry. In other words, during their studies but for sure after the degree, graduates should empower themselves with updated knowledge and skills, necessary for the modern market.

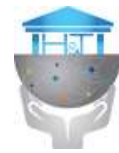
On the contrary, industry representatives seem to have significant hesitations about the skills of graduates from H&T tertiary education and how the acquired skills meet the needs of the industry. Almost all the participating experts claim that graduates from universities have more theoretical background and significant lack of practical skills. Some employers



support that the students are not well-trained but if they show the proper interest and exploit the experience of their practical exercise, they could meet industry needs. For the experts, the lack of the needed skills from the H&T graduates is due to many reasons, such as: the curricula of H&T schools are not updated or they are theoretical enough; the professors in H&T schools have no working experience in the industry (only academic background); a certain percentage of tourism graduates are not really interested working in the industry; graduates are missing certain soft skills and abilities in several areas, including customer service.

Students from **Greece** supported that a very good percentage of H&T graduates have the necessary skills and competences for the industry. There are graduates who have not only the proper knowledge and the needed skills, but also great willingness to work in H&T sector. On the other hand, the interviewees indicate that many times, the employers do not trust the new people (employees) who had just graduated. In addition, one of the participant students said that maybe H&T schools do not evolve enough their curricula in order to meet perfectly the H&T industry needs.

Finally in **Finland**, the majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement; about 63 % of the think that the graduates are well prepared for joining the workforce. However, about 1/3 of them think that they should be prepared better for the working life.



## 2. Desired Aspects and Features of an Employer Programme in the H&T sector

After clarifying, in the previous section, the opinions and perceptions by different stakeholders concerning the existing situation in cooperation(s) between the H&T industry and HEIs offering programmes in H&T, in this section we focus on what are the aspects of a perceived successful employer programme. In other words, after identifying the gaps in the partner countries, now we are going to identify the needs and expectations that different stakeholders have from an employer programme in H&T.

### **Definition of a good partnership between educational institutions and employers in the H&T sector**

In **Cyprus**, as the results of the qualitative research demonstrated, the relevant stakeholders who participated in the research, defined a good or ideal partnership between educational institutions and employers in the H&T sector, as a partnership which:

- Is characterised by constant two-way flow of communication between the H&T industry and the institutes aiming at improving educational programmes, thus enabling institutes to adapt to the ever-changing needs of the industry. This will also satisfy the needs of the industry and employers, supplying them with knowledgeable, skilled and properly educated student interns and employees, for the benefit of the H&T industry of Cyprus.
- Is based on mutual trust considering both parties' needs and wants
- Is based on constant flow of communication and frequent meetings between the partners.

All stakeholder categories seem to agree with these important points, while effective and efficient communication was stressed the most in the context of Cyprus, as crucial to the development of an employer programme that will be effective in bridging the gap between the worlds of academia in H&T and the industry in the sector.

In **Greece**, the most important points related to this question, according to the participants in the research can be summarized as follows:



- Closer, systematic and more formal cooperation between institutions, employers and students is needed, which can be achieved through:
  - Participation of various stakeholders in committees to design the study programmes
  - Defining specific research areas and research/studies conduction through students' dissertations
  - Employability: Graduates' skills and abilities improvement, through:
    - ✓ Application of new trends
    - ✓ Tourism product and hospitality services improvement
  - Companies' presentation of various departments and job to students and advance student career in a tourism related environment
  - Information sharing:
    - ✓ Student information about job requirements and peculiarities
- Systematic interaction
- Internship evaluation (advantages / disadvantages)
  - Student placements in different positions / work areas
    - ✓ Gaining experience in different departments
- Communication channel development
- Creating employer programme
- Mindset change
- Negotiations and lobbying with the ministry of education

More specifically and with respect to different stakeholder categories, HEIs representatives mentioned the lack of communication between educational institutes and the H&T sector. They define a good partnership as one that allows full and continuous communication for the current needs' identification of H&T sector. Respondents proposed frequent meetings between academic staff and the market stakeholders for the identification of the tourist sector's problems and their solutions from academia. They also emphasized to the building of "personal" relationships between the two sides. One respondent additionally propose the creation of institutional platform (electronic or not) with aim to link educational institutions and employers in the H&T sector. Industry representatives also believe that a good partnership is based on continuous and two-way communication, but they additionally highlight the necessity for the educational institutes to adopt more "practical" educational and research objectives in tourism issues. As an interviewee stated *"It often happens, students to know things that our industry does not usually do, or to do not know things that our industry needs"*. All of respondents suggest frequent meetings as well as continuous communication between educational institutions and employers in the H&T sector. In order academia to be more "practical", participants propose the reform of curriculums with emphasis to more practical and modern H&T issues and the expand of the internship



programs for the H&T students with the possibility of future employment. For internship programs, a participant mentioned that these programs should be part of a broader collaboration plan and professors (academics) should have a more active role in evaluating and leading students in internship. Another suggestion, for a more complete partnership between educational institutes and the H&T sector, was the common development of lifelong learning programs provided by academics to the personnel of H&T sector.

Students' opinion was more concise. For students, a good partnership between tertiary level educational institutions and employers in the H&T sector, should be based on the continuous communication and cooperation of the two parts. They suggest frequent visits of students to local hotels in order students having perception about the current needs of the H&T sector and extended internship programs.

As in the case of **Cyprus**, in **Greece** efficient and effective communication was the most important feature that an Employer Programme should have.

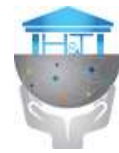
In the case of **Finland**, once again, communication is considered to be crucial, as a good partnership between educational institutions and employers in the H&T sector should be first and foremost interactive. Moreover, practical training has to become more systematic and its targets have to be clarified. Honesty and trust is also considered important. In short, a successful programme should be characterised by open-minded cooperation, distribution of information, fair distribution of resources and rewards, common targets and objectives.

Overall, **in all three countries**, there seems to be a lack of sufficient and effective communication, which hinders successful partnerships. This was made clear during the research and especially during its qualitative part (focus groups and interviews).

### **Achieving efficient & effective communication**

Since from the early stages of the research it became clear that communication is of utmost importance as there was a perceived deficit, possible ways of tackling this issue were explored.

In Cyprus, in the qualitative part of the research, all respondents agree that the achievement of effective communication and interaction between the educational institutions and the industry necessitates a constant contact between parties. This can be done through systematic meetings that can be accomplished through internships, participation in



workshops, activities and seminars, lectures, career day and open invitations to employers to visit institutions. Respondents also said that effective communication can also be achieved through the internet, the phone, skype, and other social media.

THE BEST WAYS TO ACHIEVE EFFICIENT COMMUNICATION AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING <sup>2</sup> :	CYPRUS	GREECE	FINLAND
Continuous communication through online tools	51%	60%	57%
Meetings/fora held on specified time intervals where employers and representatives of H&T Tertiary Level Educational Institutions can meet and discuss their needs, insights and ideas	66%	74%	67%
Organisation of Stakeholder Events on a frequent basis (e.g. open day events co-organised by employers)	41%	43%	37%
Newsletters/email campaigns	30%	29%	23%
Other	1%	-	-

*Table 9: Efficient communication & mutual understanding*

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<sup>2</sup> Note that the respondents in this question had the opportunity to choose more than one answers, thus the sum of the percentages is higher than 100



The best ways to achieve efficient communication and mutual understanding between the partners of an Employer Programme for the H&T industry	FINLAND			GREECE			CYPRUS		
	INDUSTRY REP	HEIS REP	STUDENTS	INDUSTRY REP	HEIS REP	STUDENTS	INDUSTRY REP	HEIS REP	STUDENTS
Continuous communication through online tools	21	9	22	17	21	10	22	15	13
Meetings/fora held on specified time intervals where employers and representatives of H&T Tertiary Level Educational Institutions can meet and discuss their needs, insights and ideas	34	10	16	44	44	58	33	12	20
Organisation of Stakeholder Events on a frequent basis (e.g. open day events co-organised by employers)	18	10	8	21	19	15	18	7	16
Newsletters/email campaigns	13	2	7	21	19	26	10	7	13

*Table 10: Comparative table: Efficient communication & mutual understanding*

In general, the most popular response in the survey as far as the most suitable communication channels are concerned, was the organisation of meetings/fora in specified intervals, in other words the respondents seem to prefer face to face communication over other forms. The responses are very close in all countries and this is important as it demonstrates that stakeholders in all countries share a common ground.

As far as the survey in **Cyprus** is concerned, the responses of the whole sample regarding ways of achieving **efficient communication and mutual understanding between the partners** of an employer programme are represented in the tables 9 and 10 with largest percentage accumulated in meetings/fora held on specific time intervals where employers and representatives of H&T tertiary level educational institutions can meet and discuss their needs, insights and ideas.

The responses concerning ways of achieving **efficient communication and mutual understanding between the partners** of an employer programme, provided by different stakeholder categories are presented in table 10.





The majority of industry representatives and students believe that the best way to achieve efficient communication and mutual understanding between partners of an employer programme is meetings/fora held on specific time intervals where employers and representatives of H&T tertiary level educational institutions can meet and discuss their needs, insights and ideas. On the other hand the majority of academics believe that this can be achieved by continuous communication through online tools.

In **Greece**, for academics, the effective communication and interaction between the educational institutions and the H&T industry could be achieved through the day visits of students in firms' facilities, the implementation of related events from academic institutions (i.e., career days), the employers' visits to universities. Industry representatives suggested activities such as the more often communication between the educational institutions and employers in the H&T sector, the identification of the gaps and the requirements of the industry through research conducted by universities, the regular meetings both in the institutions as well as in the employers' facilities, the continues involvement of hoteliers' associations and employers on academic developments (e.g. amendments in the programs of studies). An idea coming from an interviewee is: "Students could fill in questionnaires on a yearly basis, regarding potential problems with their studies, their opinions and preferences, etc. The outcomes should be circulated among educators, institutions and employers' associations". Finally, students suggested that the effective communication between the educational institutions and the H&T industry could be based on long-term cooperation and continues feedback from both sides (academics and employers).

In the survey, the responses of the whole sample regarding ways of achieving efficient communication and mutual understanding between the partners of an employer programme are represented in table 10. Overall, the responses indicate that the majority of respondents (42.5%) perceive that meetings and fora organized during specific times within a period and where stakeholders from all parts of the industry can get together, to be the most important and effective means to communicate within an employer programme. Interestingly, responses are almost equally split between the other categories in the sample. Hence, the provision of information through emails and newsletters (18.9%), the organization of stakeholder events on a regular basis (18.8%) and finally the continuous communication through online tools (18.7%) carry an equal weight on respondents' opinions.



According to the empirical evidence, all three groups of stakeholders believe that official meetings and fora organized on regular intervals are the most effective means of communication and mutual understanding among stakeholders. This is particularly true for students (58%), and less so for faculty and business people (44.3% and 42.7% respectively).

Aside from this fact though, there also appears to be a notable difference between the different stakeholder groups. More specifically, while business people and student seem to exert a preference towards newsletters and email campaigns (21% and 26% respectively). On the other hand, faculty stakeholders seem to prefer to communicate through online tools (20.8%). Even though this does not seem to be a considerable gap, once more it appears that students and business representatives tend to be closer together, as compared to faculty/academia stakeholders.

Finally, in Finland, a need for better communication and higher levels of mutual trust was identified, and the possible remedies, as identified and described by the relevant stakeholders, were recorded during our research.



In general it was surprising that communication through online tools was not a very popular response by any category of stakeholders in any country. This might be a result that can be traced to the need for face-to-face communication, which can help avoiding misunderstandings and different interpretations, while at the same time it may be traced in the mistrust towards online media.

## Expected gains from an Employer Programme

Due to the multitude of data for this section, first a table is presented, which summarises the main outcomes for all three countries and then, each country is assigned a separate sub section.

<b>POSSIBLE GAINS FOR EMPLOYERS<sup>3</sup>:</b>	<b>CYPRUS</b>	<b>GREECE</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>
Ready skilled workforce	65%	57%	58%
Access to a skilled graduate workforce	54%	63%	60%
Commercial advantage	25%	34%	29%
Status and reputation	33%	24%	39%
Access to knowledge, facilities and services	59%	57%	66%
Training provision to employees by Tertiary Level Educational Institution staff (e.g. in marketing, management, etc.)	57%	48%	39%
Skilled interns	50%	46%	47%
Commissioned research (i.e. research on a specific topic and/or setting indicated by a business according to its needs)	20%	24%	28%
<b>POSSIBLE GAINS FOR ACADEMICS AND TERTIARY LEVEL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS:</b>	<b>CYPRUS</b>	<b>GREECE</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>
Possibility of developing an applied research programme in the business	52%	71%	69%
Access to raw data provided by employers	42%	53%	33%
Constant updating of the industry needs,	48%	65%	71%

<sup>3</sup> Note that the respondents in this question had the opportunity to choose more than one answers, thus the sum of the percentages is higher than 100



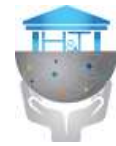
which leads to more relevant teaching and research			
Current and relevant curricula	35%	38%	56%
Enhanced employability of graduates	50%	61%	42%
Vocationally relevant curriculum	31%	24%	30%
Access to industry-standard resources	45%	40%	33%
Status and reputation	26%	27%	30%
<b>POSSIBLE GAINS FOR STUDENTS OF TERTIARY LEVEL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS</b>	<b>CYPRUS</b>	<b>GREECE</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>
Scholarships	47%	49%	70%
Awards	37%	35%	67%
Internships	60%	54%	33%
Networking	42%	53%	39%
Professional experience	70%	77%	47%
Enhanced employability	34%	51%	88%
Vocationally relevant curriculum	29%	19%	68%
Access to industry-standard resources	44%	40%	73%
Opportunities for workplace and/or placement learning	54%	69%	13%
Opportunity to develop workplace-relevant skills	51%	65%	40%

*Table 11: Possible gains-Total responses*

Before proceeding to the analysis of the results that emerged in each country separately, a general remark that is important is that in most questions, the percentage of positive responses is close, thus a uniform employer programme could potentially fulfil the needs of all stakeholders in the three countries participating in the research and who are going to pilot it.

### 1. CYPRUS

In **Cyprus**, respondents agree that all parties involved will have gains/benefits through an Employer Programme, as stated below:



- The establishment of a strong relationship between tertiary level educational institutes and employers (male, faculty)
- The creation of strong and stable bonds between all stakeholders (male, student)
- The creation of a good image/reputation for the H&T industry (male, employee)
- Students acquiring the relevant confidence, skills and knowledge while being employed in the H&T industry (female and 2 males, 2 managers and student)
- Educational institutions expanding their borders and creating new relationships with the H&T industry (male, student)
- Financial benefits for the students (male, F&B manager) for example, they will be able to gain part-time jobs The establishment of standards both for hotels and restaurants that employ front line employees (male, manager)
- The industry receiving skilled and experienced employees/staff (male, graduate/employee)
- Students being assured of a job after graduation (2 males, student and graduate/employee)
- Students receiving education based on the needs of the industry (3 males, 2 faculty and student)
- Building a good image and reputation within the industry through word-of-mouth marketing (male, graduate/employee)
- Restaurants, and not only hotels, being supplied with highly skilled students (male, owner of a restaurant)
- Students being motivated and educated by more qualified and experienced faculty (male, faculty)

In the survey, this question is important as it concerns the gains expected by different stakeholder categories through an Employer Programme. ***It is noted that all respondents were asked to reply to this question and not only the relevant category, in order to understand what each category considers as an important incentive/gain for each stakeholder.***

Nevertheless, more importance will be placed on the relevant category in each question, i.e. in the question regarding expected gains for employers; the responses provided by employers' representatives will be taken more seriously into consideration.



This part aimed at acquiring information on the expected gains from a future employers programme for the H&T industry that will systematically cultivate relationships and build partnerships between educational institutions and employers. Three close-ended questions were addressed to the respondents and covered possible gains that could be acquired by the three participants of the programme: employers, students and academia.

### Gains for Employers: Cyprus

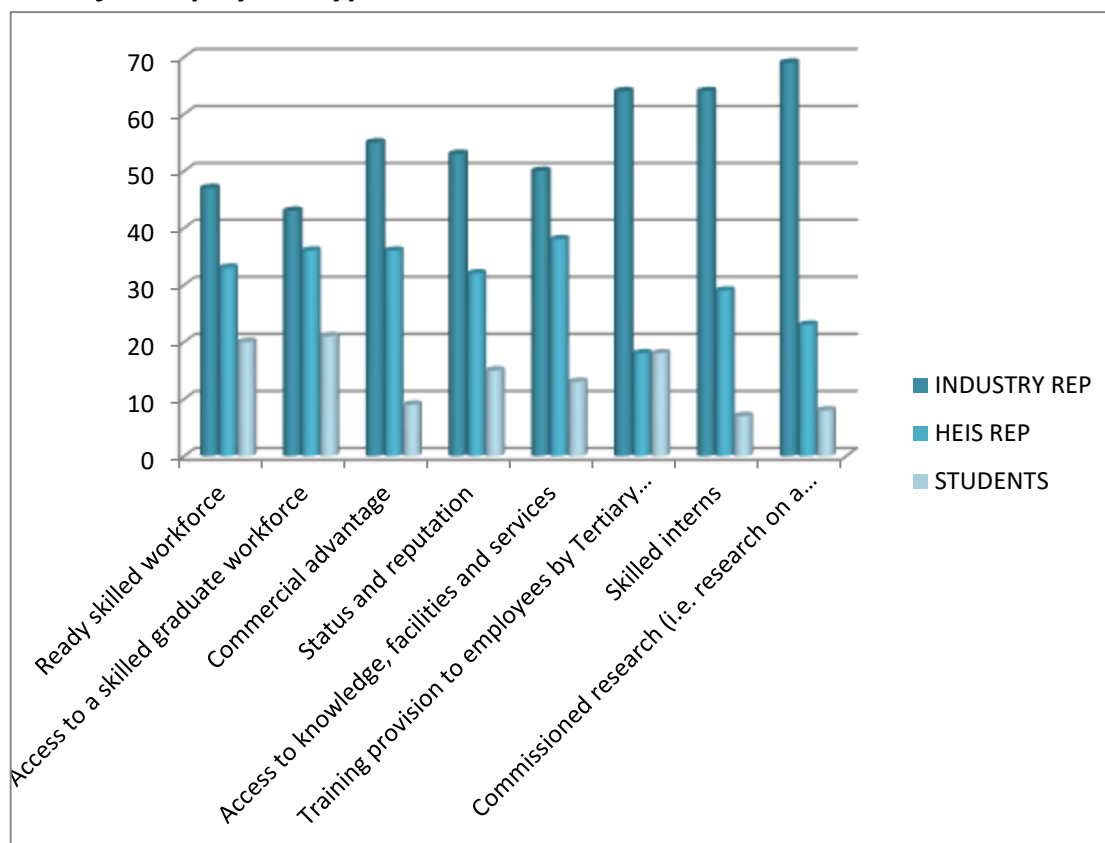


Figure 10: Possible gains for employers - CYPRUS

As demonstrated in the bar chart above the majority of industry representatives and academics believe that the main gains they will have from an employer programme is “ready skilled workforce” while the majority of students believe that the main gains for employers are equally both “access to knowledge, facilities and services” and “training provision to employees by tertiary level educational institution staff”. Interestingly, the most popular response among industry representatives was “Commissioned research”, which can add a neglected generally activity to the EPHT project. More specifically, under- and post-graduate students can be presented with a real life case study from the industry, concerning problems or opportunities and they can write a thesis on that particular topic, proposing thus free solutions to an entrepreneur. The responses that follow as far as industry representatives



are concerned, include “skilled interns” and training provision to employees by HEIs staff”. Two out of the three most popular answers involve access to knowledge rather than human resources, which is an important result to be taken into due consideration by the EPHT project.

**Gains for Academics and Tertiary Level Educational institutions: Cyprus**

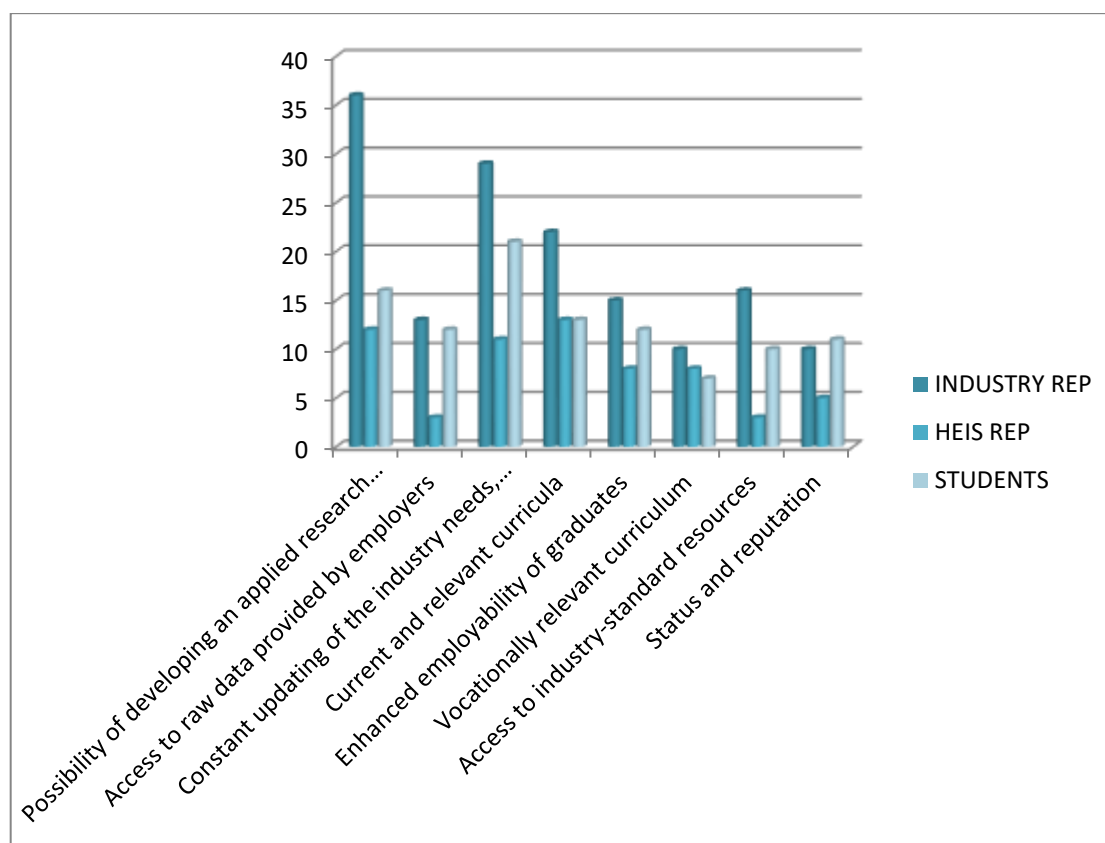
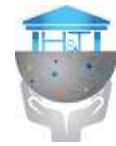


Figure 11: Possible gains for academics and HEIs - CYPRUS

The expected gains for Academics and H&T Tertiary Level Educational Institutions, according to the total sample, are represented in the figure above where the majority believe that the expected gain for academics and institution of an employer programme is the possibility of developing an applied research programme in the business.

The previous graph presents the possible gains for Academics and H&T Tertiary Level Educational Institutions as these were presented by different stakeholder categories. For academics the most popular response, i.e. the most desired gain is again concerning



knowledge, as it was “constant updating of the industry needs”, which will result in updated curricula and which leads to more relevant teaching and research”. Other popular responses for the majority of academics were “the possibility of developing an applied research programme in the business” and “enhanced employability of graduates”. Finally the majority of students believe that academics will gain “constant updating of the industry needs”.

**For Students of Tertiary Level Educational institutions: Cyprus**

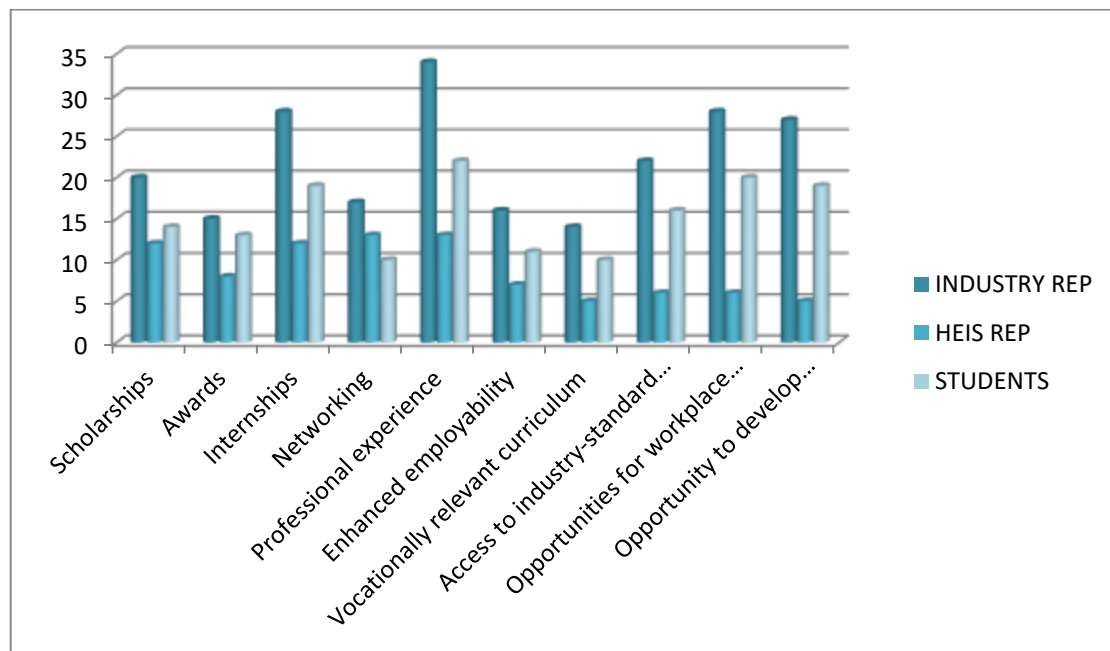


Figure 12: Possible gains for students - CYPRUS

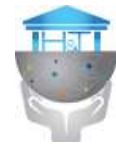
The expected gains for Academics and H&T Tertiary Level Educational Institutions, according to the total sample, are presented in figure 12 where the majority believe that the expected gain for students of an employer programme is the professional experience.

The following graph represents the possible gains for students as these were presented by different stakeholder categories:

As demonstrated in the bar chart in figure 12 the majority of industry representatives, academics and students believe that the gain students will have from an employer programme is “professional experience”. Furthermore, students also believe that “networking” can be an important gain as well.

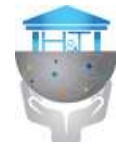
**2. GREECE**





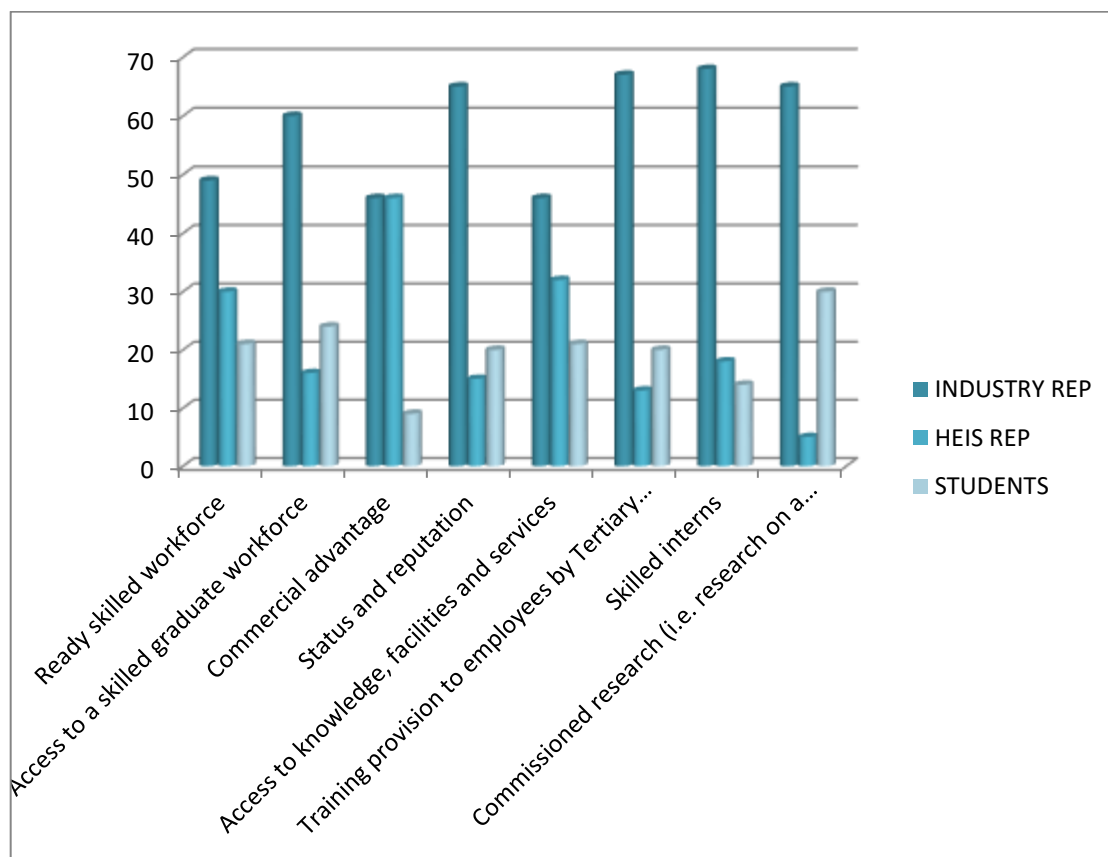
In Greece expected gains for employers included ready skilled workforce and skilled interns. Participants believe that status and reputation would be good for both academics and business people. If there would be a constant updating of the industry needs, this would lead to a more relevant teaching and research. The possibility of developing an applied research programme in business is an expected gain for academics, as well as that a commissioned research would benefit employers. Educational Institution staff could provide training education to employees and all the above-mentioned points could lead to a commercial advantage. It is important for Tertiary Level Educational Institutions and their students to have a vocationally relevant and current curriculum. Graduates' employability enhancement would benefit both academics and students. In addition, access raw data provided by employers and access to industry standard resources would be very useful to academia. H&T industry experts focused on the long run benefits of partnership programs between tertiary education and employers. All of them claim that the central output of such programs will be the well-trained staff that can provide multiple benefits to the H&T industry such as the optimal operation of H&T firms and the lower cost for in-company training because the students would have already been trained properly by the universities. The well-trained staff will also lead to the improvement of services and tourism product, in order added value to be offered to the visitors (tourists); achieving higher customer satisfaction rates will increase long term profitability of H&T firms. Surprisingly, none of the participant experts referred to other gains from partnership programs, like knowledge and knowhow spillovers and innovation. For the maximum benefits of partnership programs, industry experts said that H&T employers should give more internship positions and financial motives like higher salary to internship students and to their employees that hold a degree from H&T tertiary education.

Students would be more motivated if they were granted a scholarship or a better placement for internship and if they have opportunities for workplace learning in order to develop workplace relevant skills, having a professional experience. The main gain for all students in semi-structured interviews is the professional experience that students can have in H&T sector through the internship programs. They can have a realistic knowledge about hotel and tourism industry and the needs of their profession. Concerning their potential "losses" in order to get the maximum from such partnership programs, students referred to often extended working time they have to spend in firms for their internship and to their opportunity cost, since the salary in internship programs is small.



Academic participants seem to recognize a range of gains coming from a programme that will systematically cultivate relationships and build partnerships with H&T employers. One simple but significant gain will be the development of more dissertation papers (i.e. research) based on the market needs. The better knowledge of how the H&T industry operates will also help educational institutes to create (or co-create with other stakeholders) new and innovative touristic products and procedures. Finally, the closer the relationship between academia and the H&T market, the better the funding opportunities for common research and development projects. Concerning academics' willingness to give in order to maximize the benefits derived from a partnership with H&T employers, all interviewees agreed that they have to give much more time and effort for contacts and communication, as well as for the design and implementation of common projects with the H&T sector.

### ***Gains for Employers: Greece***



*Figure 13: Possible gains for employers - GREECE*

“Access to ready skilled workforce” is the most expected gain for employers (18%). After this, “Access to skilled interns” and “Access to knowledge, facilities and services” got 16% of the total sample respectively. “Access to a skilled graduate workforce” percentage is up to



14%, “Status and reputation” and “Commissioned research” (i.e. research on a specific topic and/or setting indicated by a business according to its needs) have equal percentages up to 11%. Just 8% support “Training provision to employees by Tertiary Level Educational Institution staff” as an expected gain and last but not least “Commercial advantage” is at the bottom last of the list of expected gains for employers with 6%.

Figure 13 presents the possible gains for employers as these were presented by different stakeholder categories.

The discussion next moves on to the examination of the results concerning the interaction of employer gains over respondents’ status. Based on the information on figure 13 above, 48.5% of industry representatives believe that business people would benefit from access to a ready skilled workforce. The corresponding figure was 30.3% for Educational Institution representatives and 21.2% for students.

Concerning information on figure 6 above, 60% of Industry representatives think that “Access to a skilled graduate workforce” would be an advantage for employers. A quarter of Students and 16% of Educational Institution representatives have the same opinion.

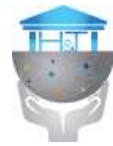
“Commercial advantage” had the lowest percentage in total sample. Both Industry and Educational Institution representatives believe that commercial advantage would be good for industry with equal percentages up to 45.5% and only 9.1% of Students think the same.

“Status and reputation” is an important expected gain for employers; for this reason 65% of Industry representatives, 20% Students and 15% Educational Institution representatives have similar thoughts.

According to what figure 13 shows 46.4% of Industry representatives, 32.1% Educational Institution representatives and 21.4% of Students believe that “Access to knowledge, facilities and services” would be useful for employers.

“Training provision to employees by Tertiary Level Educational Institution staff” (e.g. in marketing, management, etc.) would be another expected gain for employers in a lower level of importance. However, 67% of Industry representatives, 20% of Students and 13.3% of Educational Institution representatives believe that this is a possible profit for employers.

Skilled interns seem to be a very important expected gain for employers. Nearly 68% of Industry representatives, 18% of Educational Institution representatives and 14% of



Students think that skilled intern would be good for business people. Thus, it appears that the provision of skilled interns is a truly 'rare commodity' for business people in the H&T industry.

At a level of importance, "Commissioned research" got the 4<sup>th</sup> position of expected gain for employers' list (in total), 65% of Industry representatives and 30% of Students consider that commissioned research could benefit employers. It is important to mention that only 5% of Educational Institution representatives believe in that prospect. Overall, this is a rather unexpected finding, considering that the majority of literature in the employer programmes filed indicates that one reason as to why faculty and academia participate in these types of projects is consultancy and industrial (applied) research.



### **Gains for Academics and Tertiary Level Educational institutions: Greece**

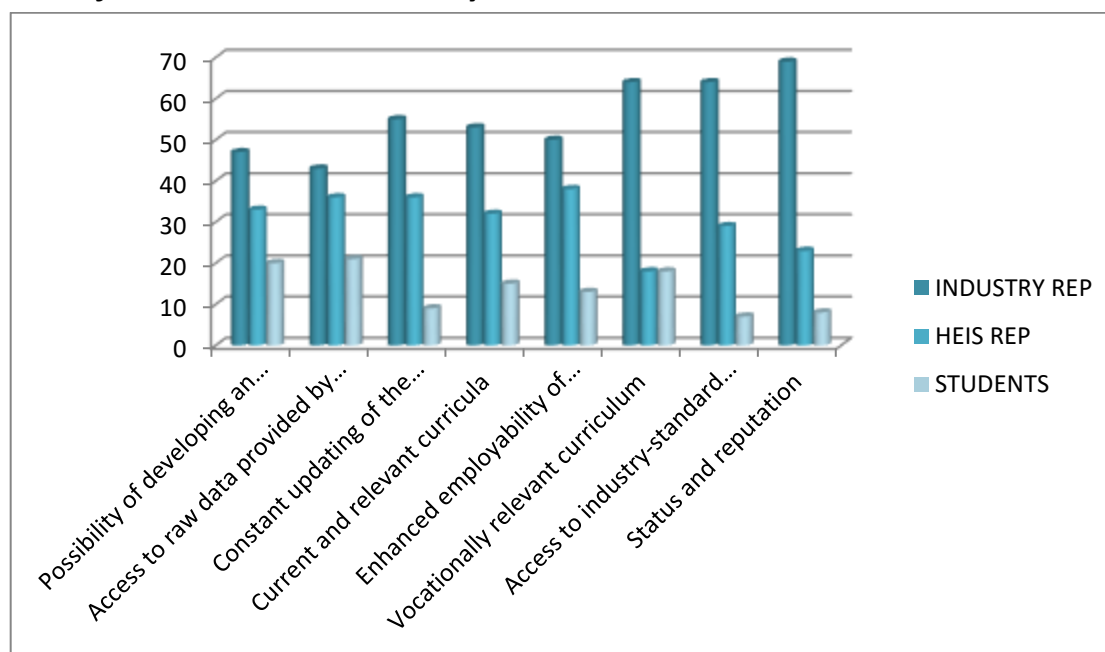


Figure 14: Possible gains for academics and HEIs - GREECE

More than a quarter of the total sample (28%) believes in the “Possibility of developing an applied research programme in business” as the most expected gain. According to the figure above “Current and relevant curricula” has the second position on the list with 22%. The following expected gain for academics and Institutions is the possibility to enhance employability of graduates (10%). There are two expected gains at the fourth position which are “Access to raw data provided by employers” and “Access to industry-standard resources” getting 9% of total sample respectively. “Status and Reputation” seems to be a less important expected gain, which got 8% of the total sample. Eventually, last two expected gains with equal percentages (7%) are “Constant updating of the industry needs, which leads to more relevant teaching” and “Research and vocationally relevant curriculum”.

Figure 14 presents the possible gains for Academics and H&T Tertiary Level Educational Institutions as these were presented by different stakeholder categories.

The discussion next moves on to the examination of the results concerning the interaction of academics gains over respondents’ status, based on the information on figure 14 above 47% of industry representatives believe in the possibility of developing an applied research programme in business, a possibility that would be helpful to academics. The corresponding figure was 33% for academia representatives and 20% for students.



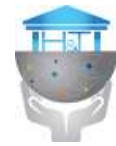
Concerning “Access raw data provided by employers”, 43% of the Industry representatives believe that it would be good for academics if employers provide access raw data, 36% of Educational Institution representatives and 21% of Students agree with this statement.

More than half of Industry representatives (55%) believe that constant updating of the industry needs would lead to more relevant teaching and research so it would benefit academics. The corresponding figure was 36% for Educational Institution representatives and only 9% for Students.

Three out of ten Educational Institution respondents believe that a current and relevant curriculum would benefit them, 53% of Industry representatives have the same opinion as well as 15% of the Student. Obviously, 38% of academia representatives think enhancement of graduates’ employability as the basis for all the other expected gains for academics, 50% of Industry representatives and 12% of Students believe the same. Although 64% of Industry representatives believe in a vocationally relevant curriculum as an advantage for academics, Educational Institution representatives do not seem to have the same belief since only 18% of the respondents were academics.

Based on the information on figure 14 above, about the same happens to the last two expected gains for academics and institutions. More specifically, of all the respondents who believe in “Access to industry-standard resources”, 64% were Industry representatives, 29% were academics/staff and 7% were Students. Seven out of ten (69%) Industry representatives’ point of view is that “Status and Reputation” represents the most important advantage for academics. On the other hand, only 23% of Educational Institution representatives and 8% agree with that opinion.

In conclusion, based on the information on figure 8, Educational Institution representatives’ argue that the first three most important expected gain for them are enhancement of graduates’ employability, then constantly updating the industry needs, which would lead to more relevant teaching and research, as well as employers to provide access raw data. Thus, academics seem to place very highly the ability to be close to industry needs and enhancement of the academic curriculum, as compared to research and consultancy. Another reading of this could be that academics and faculty representatives put the ‘social’ benefits derived from an employer programme at a higher place as compared to ‘individual’ ones.



Students believe that the most important academic gains are primarily access to raw data provided by employers and secondly the possibility of developing an applied research programme in business.

On the other hand, Industry representatives believe that “Status and reputation” and “Access to industry-standard resources” are more possible expected gains for academics than previous mentioned points.

**Gains for Students of Tertiary Level Educational institutions: Greece**

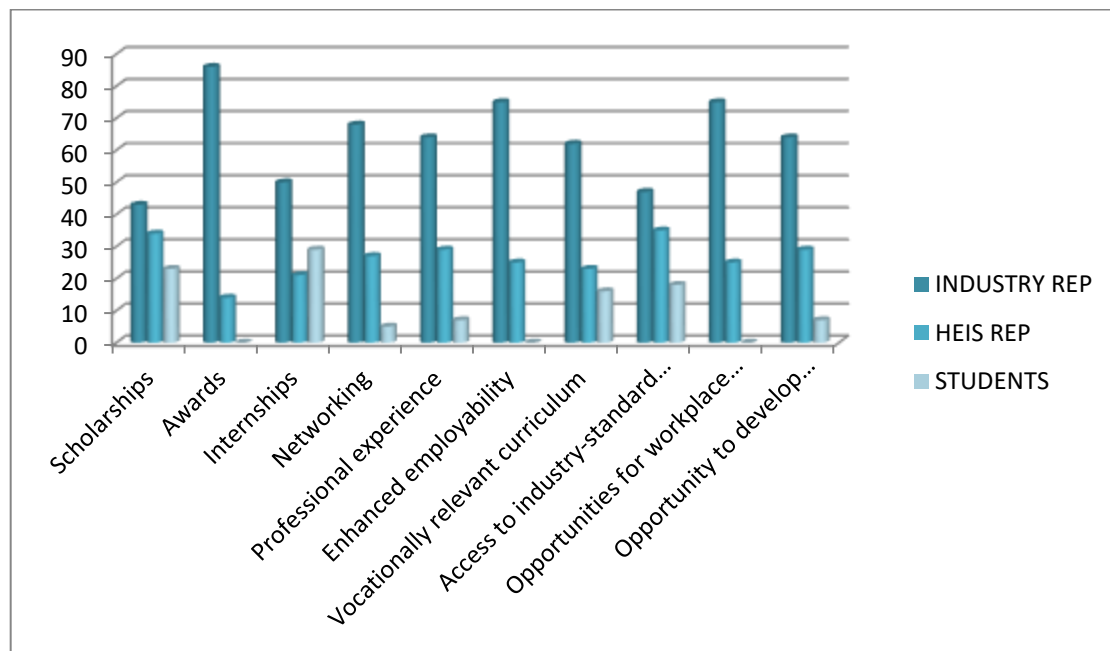
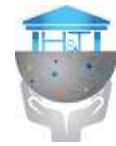


Figure 15: Possible gains for students - GREECE

According to table 8 the most expected gains for students is getting a “Scholarship” (26%), the possibility to experience “Internships” (13%) and widening “Networking” (12%). Students will also benefit if they have “Access to industry-standard resources” (10%), as well as giving them “opportunities for workplace and/or placement learning” (9%) or opportunity to develop workplace relevant skills (9%); 8% of the total sample thinks that “professional experience” would be an expected advantage for students, 7% believe that a “vocationally relevant curriculum” would be good for them and only 4% consider that “awards” could be beneficial for students.

Figure 15 represents the possible gains for students as these were presented by different stakeholder categories.



The examination of the results concerning interaction of students' gains over respondents' status based on the information on figure 15.

Considering "Scholarships" 42.6% Industry representatives believe that a scholarship is a great profit for students' effort, 34% of Educational Institutions representatives and 23.4% of Students support this point of view.

No student believe in awarding as opposed to 85.7% of business people or 14.3% of academics who think that award is a possible expected gain for students.

Internships are a very important expected gain for all the respondents. More specifically 50% of Industry representatives, 29.2% of Students and 20.8% of Educational Institutions representatives consider internship as a way for students to learn how to use their knowledge in a workplace, so it would be helpful for them.

According to the results 68.2% of Industry representatives, 27.3% of Academics and only 4.5% of Students believe that increasing "networking" would be good for the last mentioned.

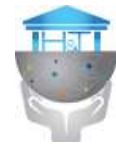
Two out of three (64.3%) Industry representatives think that professional experience could be helpful for students and 28.6% of academics agree with that point. It is very important to mention that only one out of twenty students have the same opinion. Overall, this is a particularly puzzling finding and one that cannot be explained that easily. One way to interpret this result is that students may be influenced by current practices in the field, so this extremely low percentage may be indicative of their critical stands at current practices in the area.

Three quarters (75%) of business people thinks that "enhanced employability" would be an advantage for students, but as it seems no student agree with that statement. As it appears in the above figure, exactly the same results also apply to workplace and/or placement learning opportunities.

A vocationally relevant curriculum would be a possible expected gain for students. Those who have the same point of view are 61.8% of Industry representatives, 23.1% of Educational Institutions representatives and 15.9% of students.

Eventually, according to the results 64.3% of Industry representatives think that giving students the "opportunity to develop workplace relevant skills" would be very useful for





them, 28.6% of Educational Institution representatives and 7.1% of Students have the same thought.

### 3. FINLAND

According to the Finnish participants, a partnership is expected to benefit all relevant stakeholders, as the students get the opportunity to get a job, while employers will have access to skilled employees and academic institutions will be able to make their curricula more relevant.

More specifically, the results of the survey in Finland are presented below.

#### ***Gains for Employers: Finland***

The following graph presents the possible gains for employers as these were presented by different stakeholder categories.

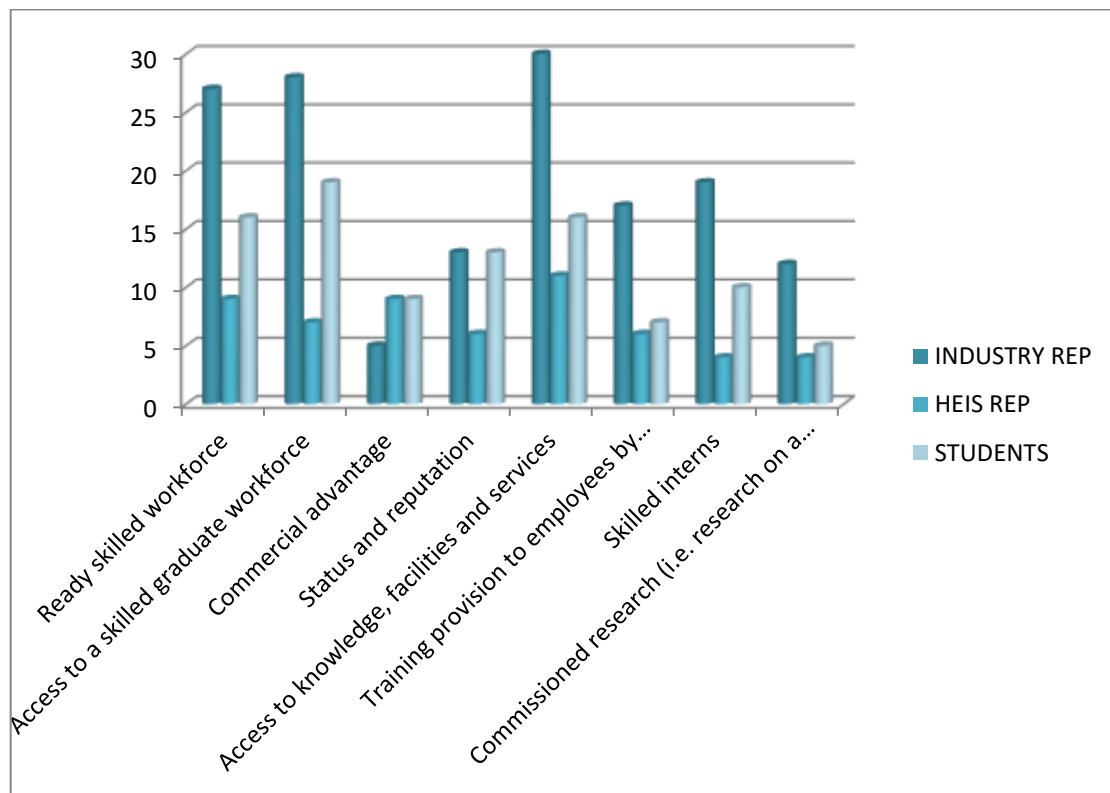


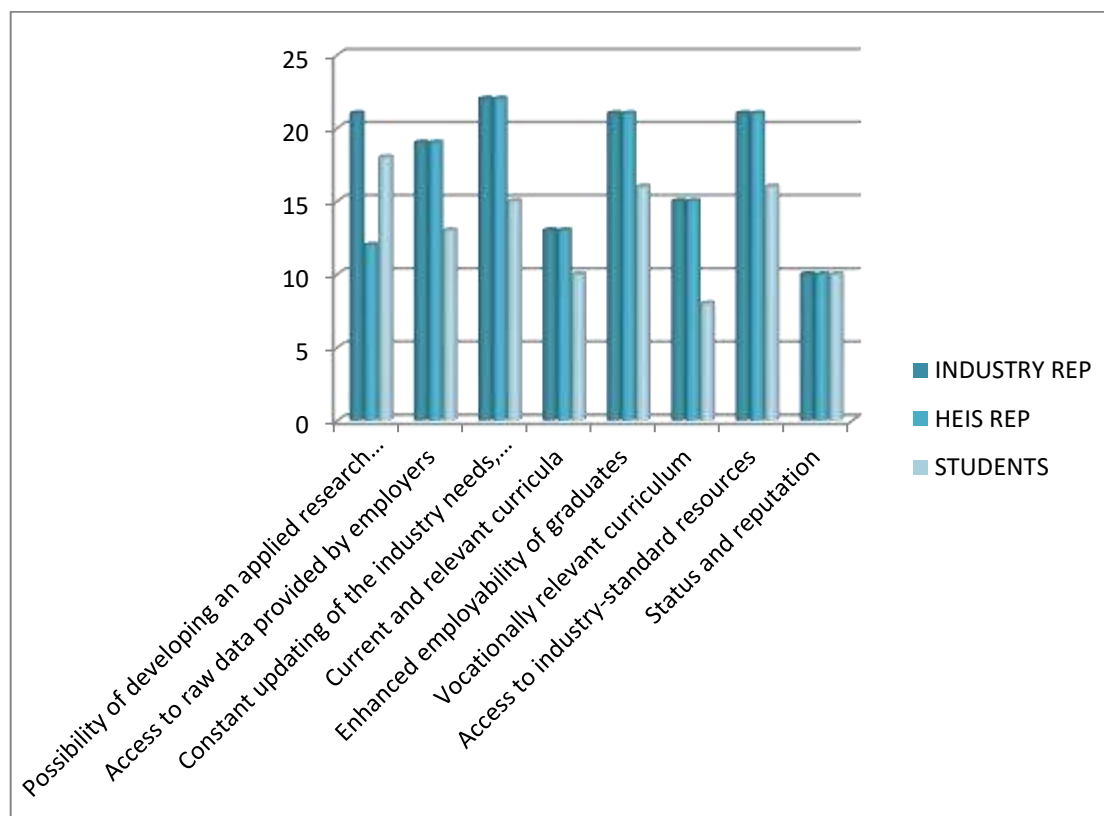
Figure 16: Possible gains for employers – FINLAND

As shown in figure 16, among industry representatives, the most popular response, the most desired by them gain concerns knowledge, as the previous results in Greece and Cyprus. It is “Access to knowledge, facilities and services”. The human capital related responses were also important for Finnish employers, such as “ready skilled workforce” and “access to a



skilled graduate workforce”. The rest of the responses are much less popular in this question. It is noteworthy that the other two stakeholder types agree with those responses, but also believe that “commercial advantage” could be another important gain for employers, an answer which is the least popular one for the latter.

### ***Gains for Academics and Tertiary Level Educational institutions: Finland***



*Figure 17: Possible gains for academics and HEIs - FINLAND*

The above graph presents the possible gains for Academics and H&T Tertiary Level Educational Institutions as these were presented by different stakeholder categories in Finland. The most popular responses provided by the relevant stakeholder type, i.e. academics and staff of HEIs, included:

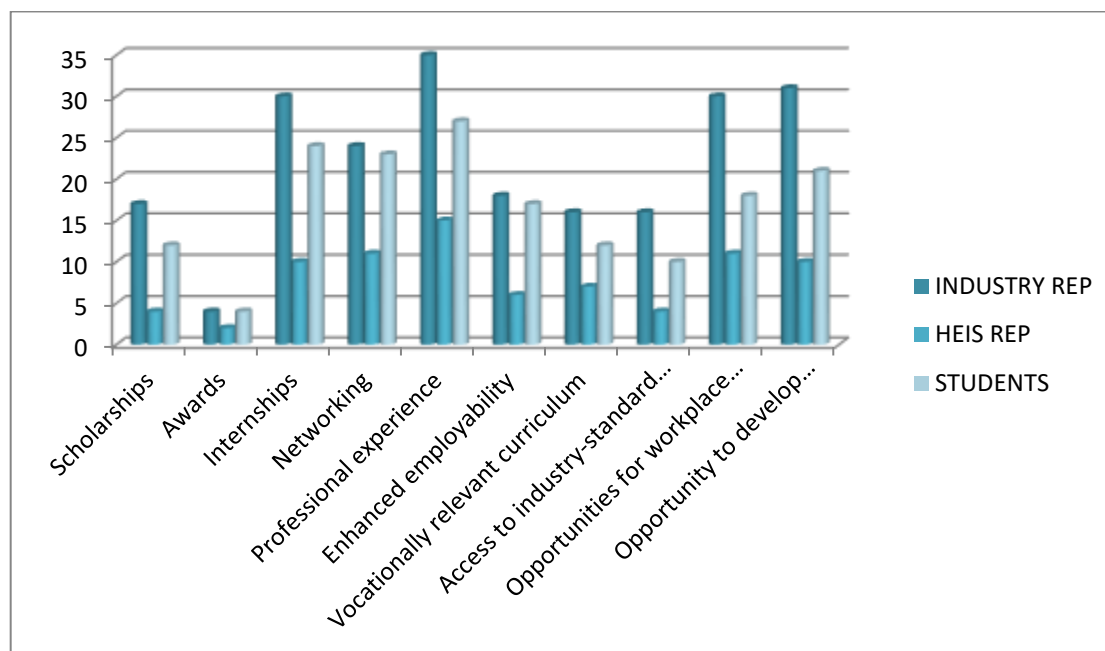
- Access to raw data provided by employers
- Constant updating of the industry needs, which leads to more relevant teaching and research
- Enhanced employability of graduates
- Access to industry-standard resources



This result is in line with the other two countries, as academics expect to gain access to knowledge related resources rather than others.

### ***Gains for Students of Tertiary Level Educational institutions: Finland***

The following graph represents the possible gains for students as these were presented by different stakeholder categories:

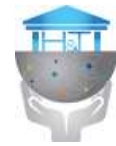


*Figure 18: Possible gains for students – FINLAND*

For Finnish students, the most important gains expected through an employer programme, include:

- ✓ Internships
- ✓ Networking
- ✓ Professional experience
- ✓ Opportunity to develop workplace-relevant skills

As in Greece and Cyprus, students in Finland value networking and high quality internships. They want to acquire professional experience during their studies, which they will be able to utilize during their career.



### ***POSSIBLE GAINS: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH***

In Cyprus, during the qualitative part of the research, the participants cited multiple gains resulting from an employer programme for all the stakeholders involved but also identified a number of challenges that need to be provided for, stressing the need to improve the image of tourist professions. They recommended the provision of an incentive scheme which will enhance the attractiveness of the employer programme and outlined multiple rewards that could be offered. They gave various examples of collaborative activities that could be included in an employer programme and specified the critical success factors for its development and implementation. The majority of participants believe that the expected gains from the employer programme for industry representatives include access to ‘ready skill workforce’, ‘skilled graduate workforce’ and ‘access to knowledge, facilities and services’. Similarly, the majority of participants believe that the gains for the academics are the ‘possibility of developing an applied research programme in the business’ and ‘enhanced employability of graduates’, whereas, the majority of participants believe that students will gain ‘professional experience’. This concludes that the gains for each stakeholder category might vary and these need to be carefully considered in the design and implementation of the employer programme in order to ensure the successful operation of the system. Clearly the common elements across stakeholder category are those that can cultivate the sense of partnership and ownership in the system but individual benefits also need to be addressed. Properly addressing the various gains and rewards from the system will also prove valuable in the formulation of the communication strategy to be used as well as the incentive scheme to be incorporated in the system.

In Greece, all stakeholders agree on the perceived benefits each party could gain from such a strategic partnership. This is particularly important because it indicates that everyone is aware of its contribution to the strategic partnership and what would be the benefit afterwards. There seems to be broad agreement between stakeholders regarding the potential gains and rewards most likely to accrue to each type of stakeholder. This is particularly important because it indicates that everyone is aware of its contribution to the strategic partnership and what would be the benefit afterwards. Hence, there is no need to make a ‘fresh start’ since the basic requirements and prerequisites are already here | established. This implies that everyone agrees and has considered seriously the potential payoff from participating in such a programme. There seems to be broad agreement between stakeholders regarding the potential gains and rewards most likely to accrue to each type of stakeholder.



Finally, in Finland, participants cited many possible rewards for participants in an employer programme, including:

- Increased responsibilities for students
- All partners will increase their skills

## Expected contribution to an Employer Programme

In this section, the expected contribution is stated by each stakeholder category. It is important because, on the one hand, it allows us to understand what each category is eager to contribute and, on the other, we can understand what they are expected to be given by other stakeholders. The results are presented in a graphic and visual manner, as the graphs are self-explanatory. The comments below each graph emphasise the most popular responses provided by the relevant stakeholder type of each question. They include comparative information in terms of countries and stakeholder category.

POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYERS <sup>4</sup> :	CYPRUS	GREECE	FINLAND
Provide guest speakers from the industry	58%	59%	68%
Participate in researches and surveys for the improvement of the curricula	45%	66%	46%
Donate equipment to tertiary level educational institutions	32%	26%	11%
Provide Enterprise Advisors	42%	41%	35%
Provide funding for the Employer Programme	27%	28%	26%
Provide temporary employment to students/graduates	50%	57%	44%
Donate materials to tertiary level educational institutions	26%	13%	17%
Provide work experience/practical exercise programmes to students	54%	66%	57%
Organise student visits in the organisation	54%	60%	69%
Display stands of the Employer Programme in the organization	19%	11%	11%

<sup>4</sup> Note that the respondents in this question had the opportunity to choose more than one answers, thus the sum of the percentages is higher than 100



Organise and review mock applications & interviews	26%	22%	17%
Participation in the development of curricula	26%	36%	30%
Deliver thematic workshops/seminars	36%	43%	45%
Provide job shadowing opportunities for students	43%	39%	43%
Provide mentoring to students	41%	50%	56%
Organise/fund/implement sponsorships/competitions	32%	29%	18%
Provide e-mentoring to students	25%	24%	28%
Accept teacher placements	35%	27%	26%
Provide & subsidize project/dissertation ideas	25%	27%	30%
<b>POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTION OF ACADEMICS AND TERTIARY LEVEL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS:</b>	<b>CYPRUS</b>	<b>GREECE</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>
Design/implement/participate in researches and surveys for the improvement of the curricula	50%	58%	49%
Organise Industry Days in the Institution	48%	58%	42%
Provide funding for the Employer Programme	35%	30%	28%
Provide teacher placements in the industry	40%	43%	49%
Facilitate temporary employment of students/graduates	48%	41%	43%
Facilitate/organise work experience/practical exercise programmes	48%	53%	56%
Organise and implement industry Visits	53%	55%	49%
Establish in-school job-shops where students can obtain information on the employers who participate in the Programme and vacancies	38%	35%	36%
Organise and review mock Applications & Interviews	29%	26%	16%
Offer venues in the school premises for conferences etc.	26%	25%	27%
Organise thematic workshops/seminars	46%	59%	51%



Organise/implement/fund sponsorship/ Competitions	29%	27%	23%
Display stands where the programme as well as the participating employers will be advertised	28%	18%	24%
<b>POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS OF TERTIARY LEVEL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS</b>	<b>CYPRUS</b>	<b>GREECE</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>
Participate in researches and surveys for the improvement of the curricula	47%	69%	60%
Attend Industry Days	51%	61%	40%
Participate in industry Visits	59%	66%	69%
Participate in work experience/practical exercise programmes	66%	77%	73%
Participate in mock Applications & Interviews	39%	38%	30%
Participate in thematic workshops/seminars	52%	68%	56%
Participate in job shadowing	44%	56%	54%

Table 12: Possible contribution

**GREECE**

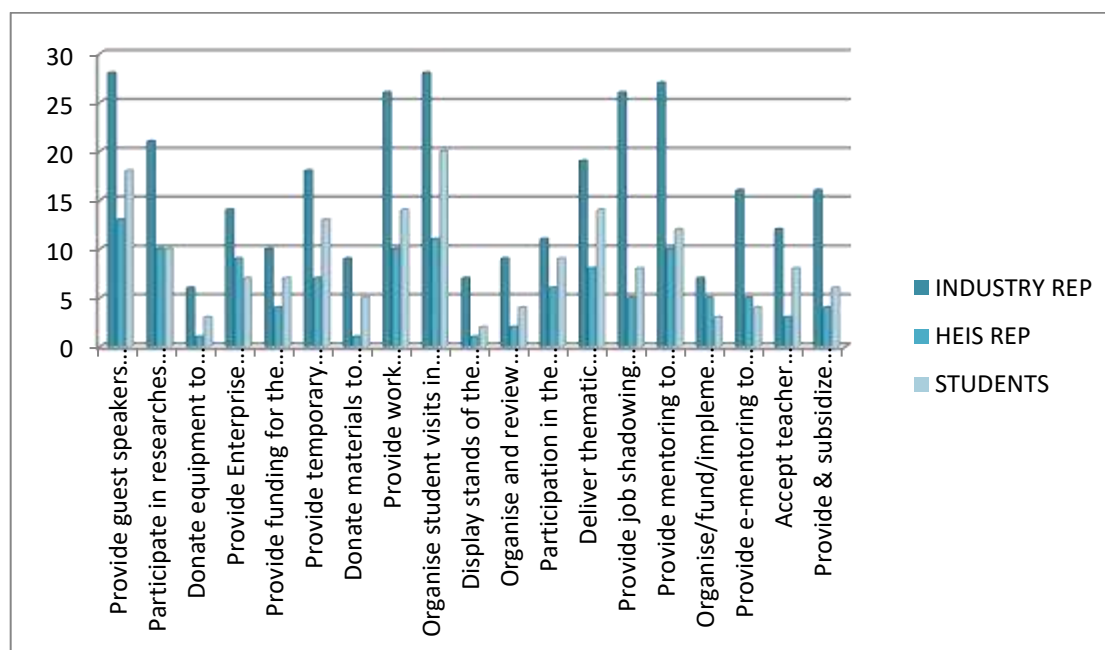


Figure 19: Possible contribution of employers – GREECE



In Greece, industry representatives are eager to provide various elements in an employer programme, most of them though concern time and knowledge, rather than funding or other tangible resources, such as equipment. The most popular responses include:

- ✓ Provide guest speakers from the industry
- ✓ Provide work experience/practical exercise programmes to students
- ✓ Organise student visits in the organisation
- ✓ Provide job shadowing opportunities for students
- ✓ Provide mentoring to students

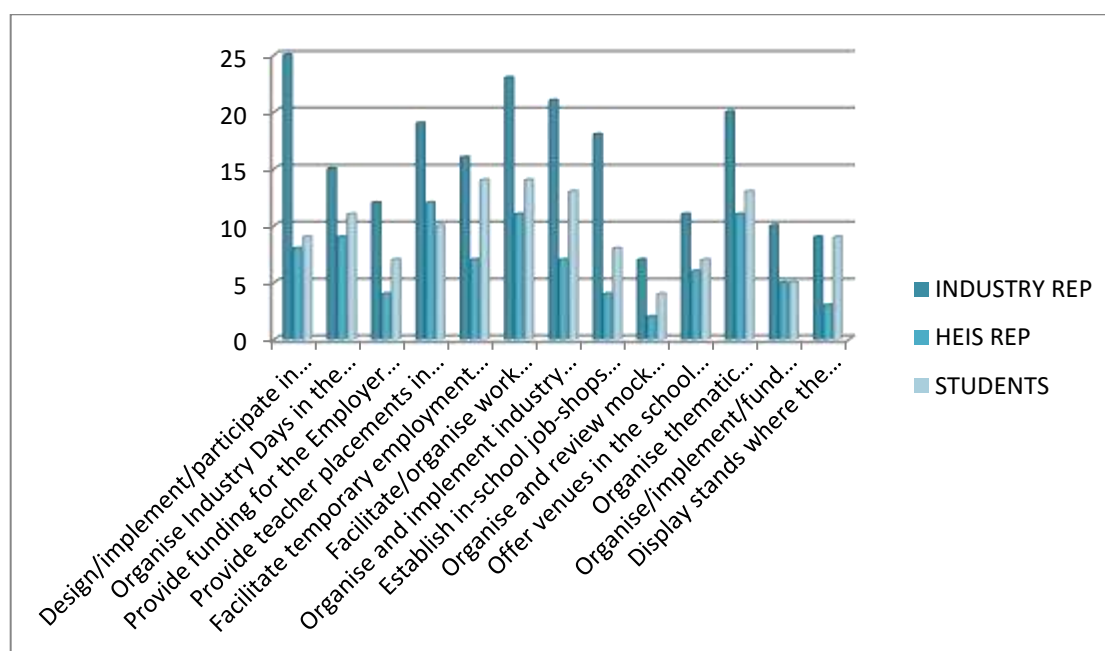


Figure 20: Possible contribution of academics and HEIs – GREECE

Greek academics and HEIs' staff, are eager to give:

- ✓ Organise Industry Days in the Institution
- ✓ Provide teacher placements in the industry
- ✓ Facilitate/organise work experience/practical exercise programmes
- ✓ Organise thematic workshops/seminars

The aforementioned responses are the most popular ones.



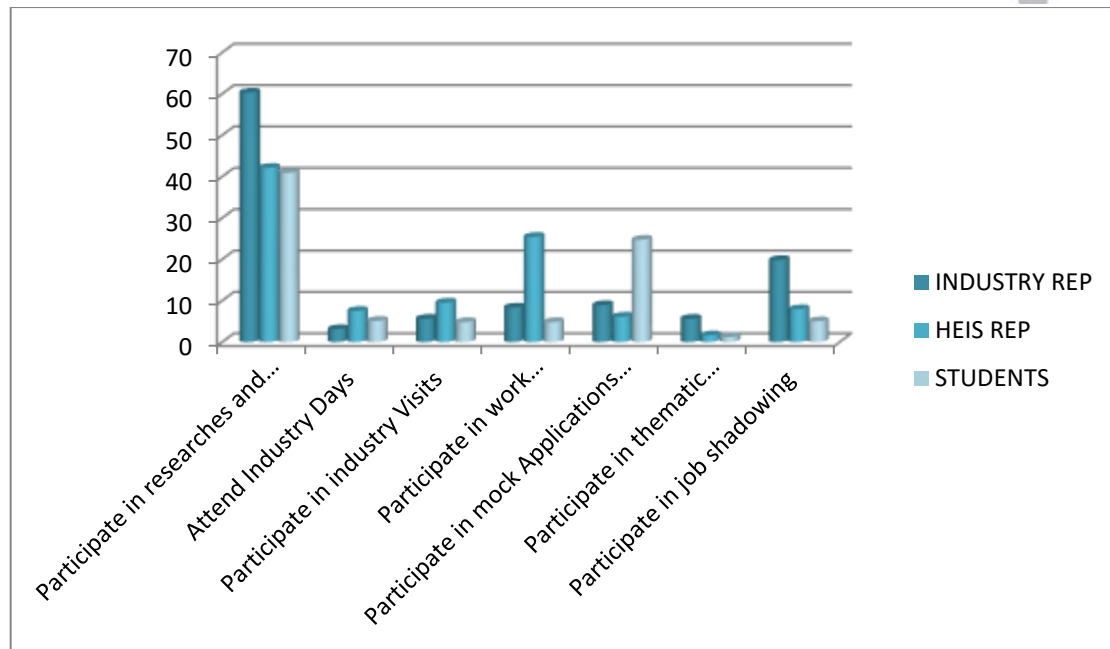
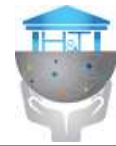


Figure 21: Possible contribution of students - GREECE

The most popular responses among students in Greece, included:

- ✓ Participate in researches and surveys for the improvement of the curricula
- ✓ Participate in mock Applications & Interviews

### FINLAND

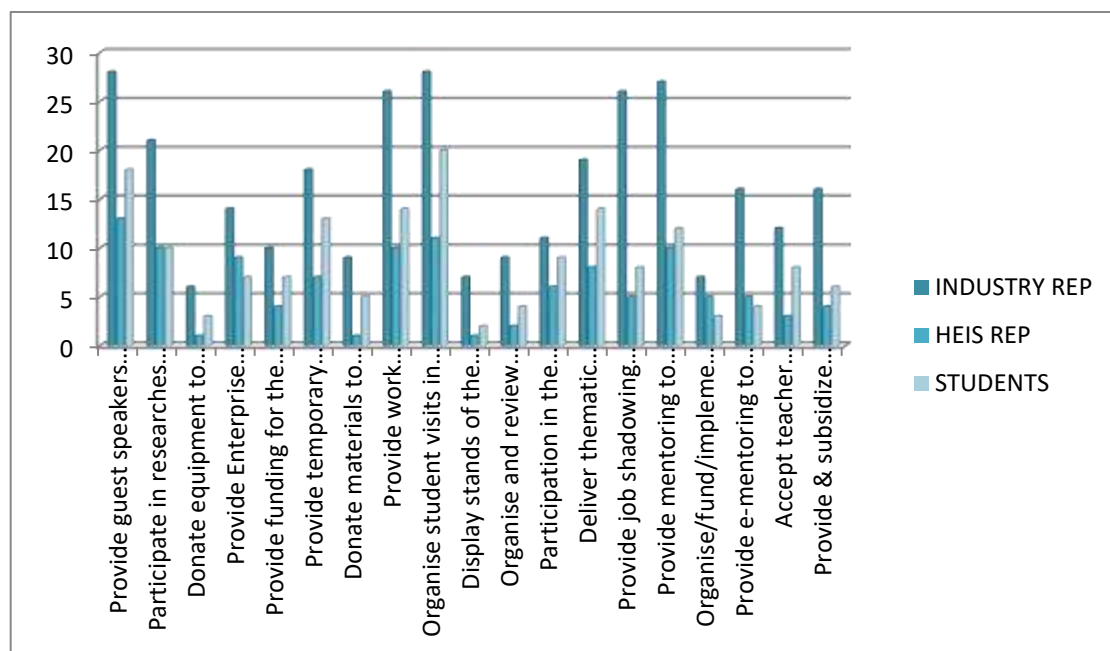




Figure 22: Possible contribution of employers – FINLAND

Finnish industry representatives are willing to contribute by:

- ✓ Providing guest speakers from the industry
- ✓ Providing work experience/practical exercise programmes to students
- ✓ Organising student visits in the organisation
- ✓ Providing job shadowing opportunities for students
- ✓ Providing mentoring to students

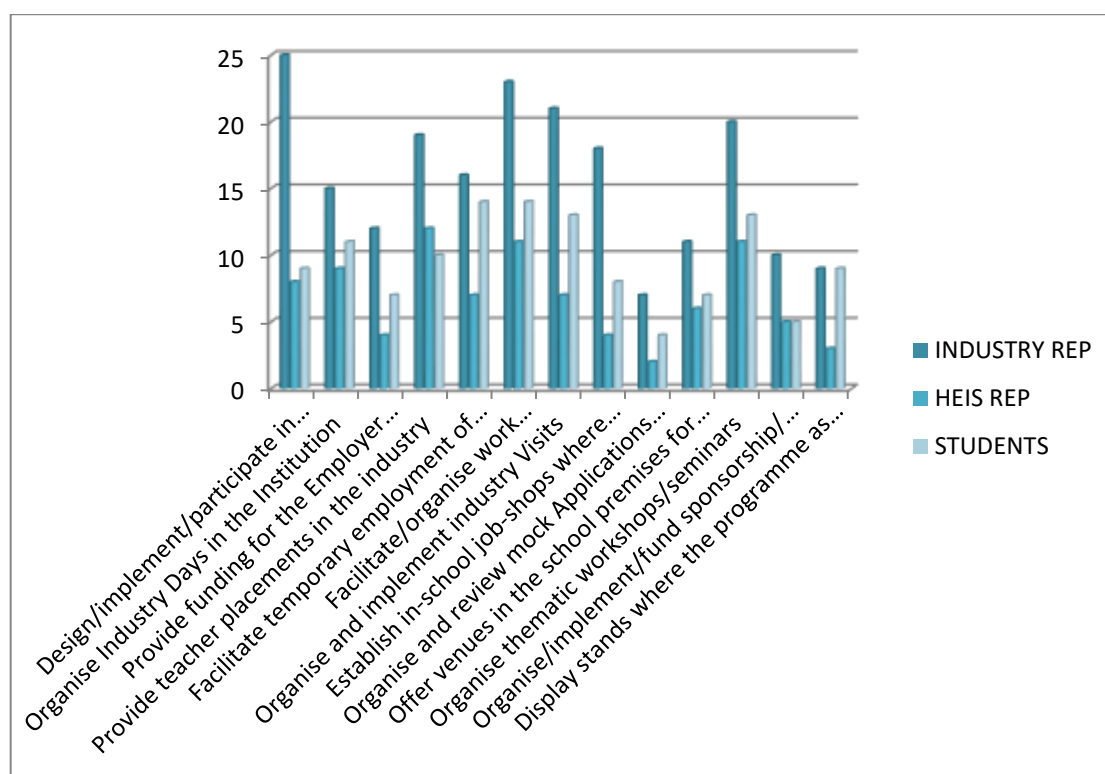


Figure 23: Possible contribution of academics and HEIs – FINLAND

As shown in figure 23, academics and staff of HEIs in Finland have a clear opinion, as far as their contribution is concerned. According to the most preferred responses, they state that they can:

- ✓ Provide teacher placements in the industry
- ✓ Facilitate/organise work experience/practical exercise programmes
- ✓ Organise and implement industry Visits
- ✓ Organise thematic workshops/seminars

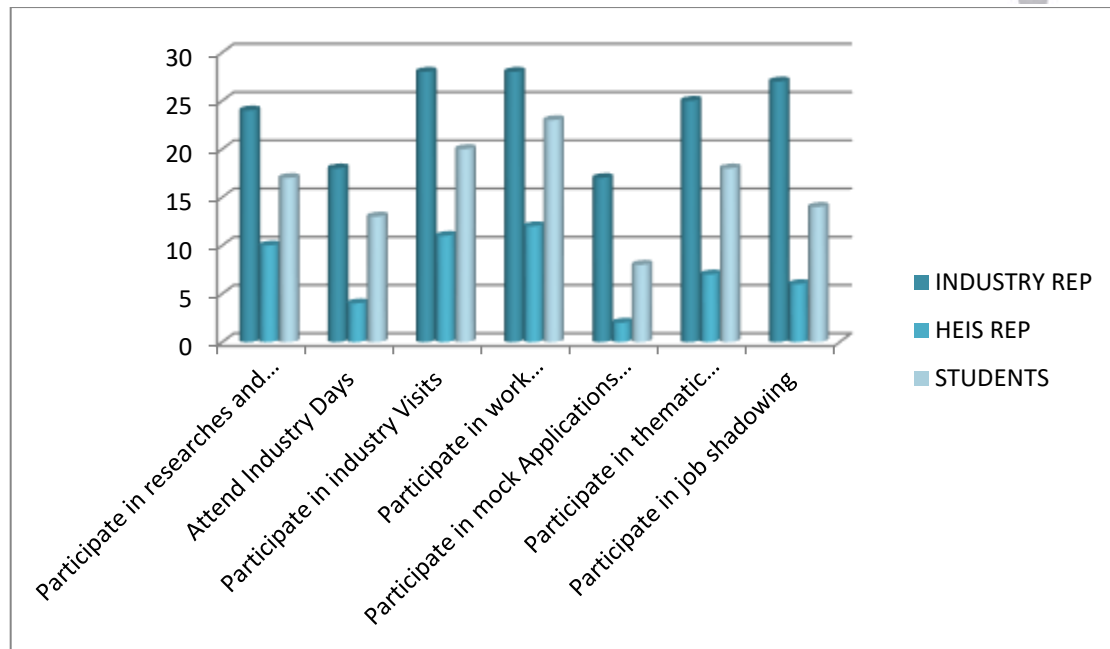
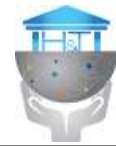


Figure 24: Possible contribution of students – FINLAND

Finnish students can:

- ✓ Participate in researches and surveys for the improvement of the curricula
- ✓ Participate in industry Visits
- ✓ Participate in work experience/practical exercise programmes
- ✓ Participate in thematic workshops/seminars

### CYPRUS

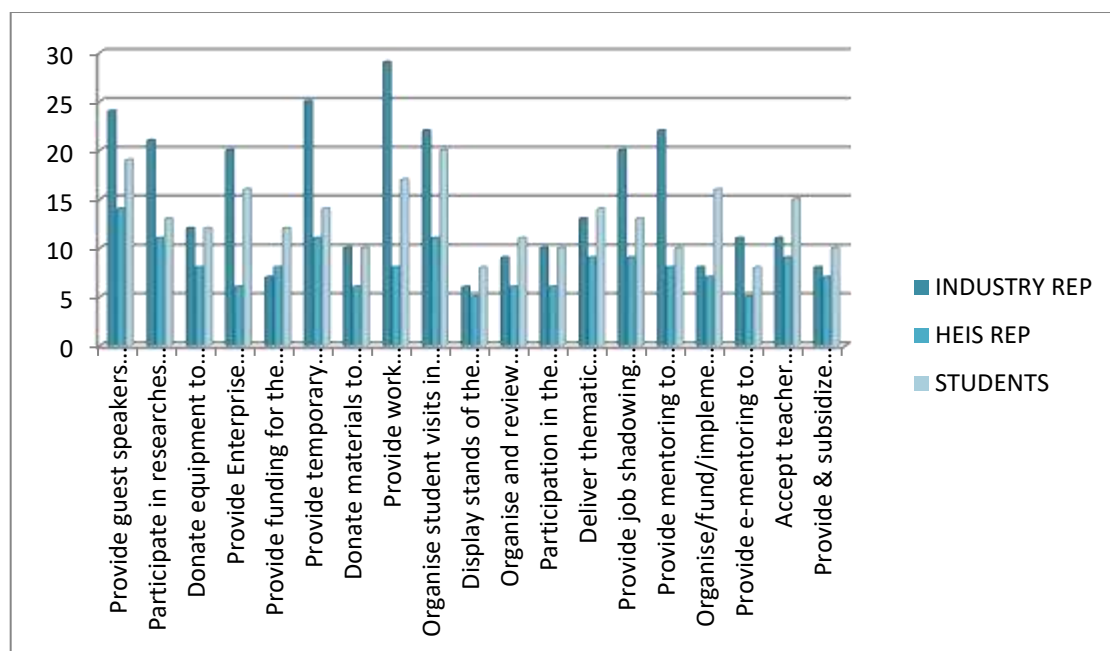




Figure 25: Possible contribution of employers – CYPRUS

In Cyprus, employers are willing to:

- ✓ Provide guest speakers from the industry
- ✓ Participate in researches and surveys for the improvement of the curricula
- ✓ Provide Enterprise Advisors
- ✓ Provide temporary employment to students/graduates
- ✓ Provide work experience/practical exercise programmes to students
- ✓ Organise student visits in the organisation
- ✓ Provide job shadowing opportunities for students
- ✓ Provide mentoring to students

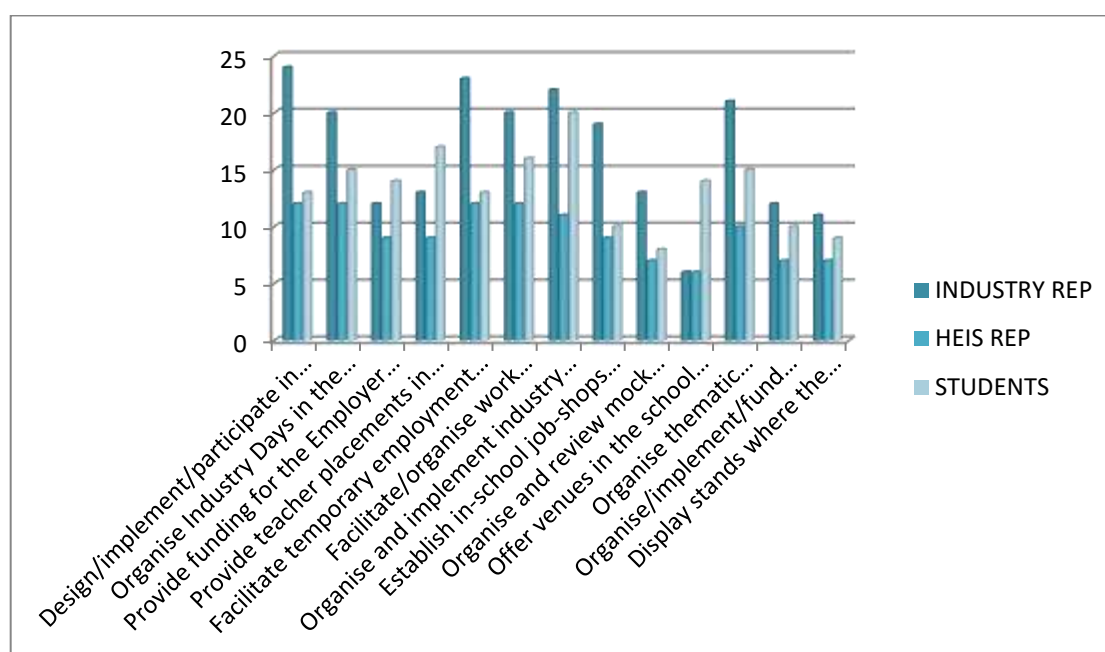


Figure 26: Possible contribution of academics and HEIs – CYPRUS

On the other hand, academics and HEIs staff, believe that they can contribute in various ways. According to the most popular ones, they are eager to:

- ✓ Design/implement/participate in researches and surveys for the improvement of the curricula
- ✓ Organise Industry Days in the Institution
- ✓ Provide funding for the Employer Programme
- ✓ Facilitate/organise work experience/practical exercise programmes
- ✓ Organise and implement industry Visits

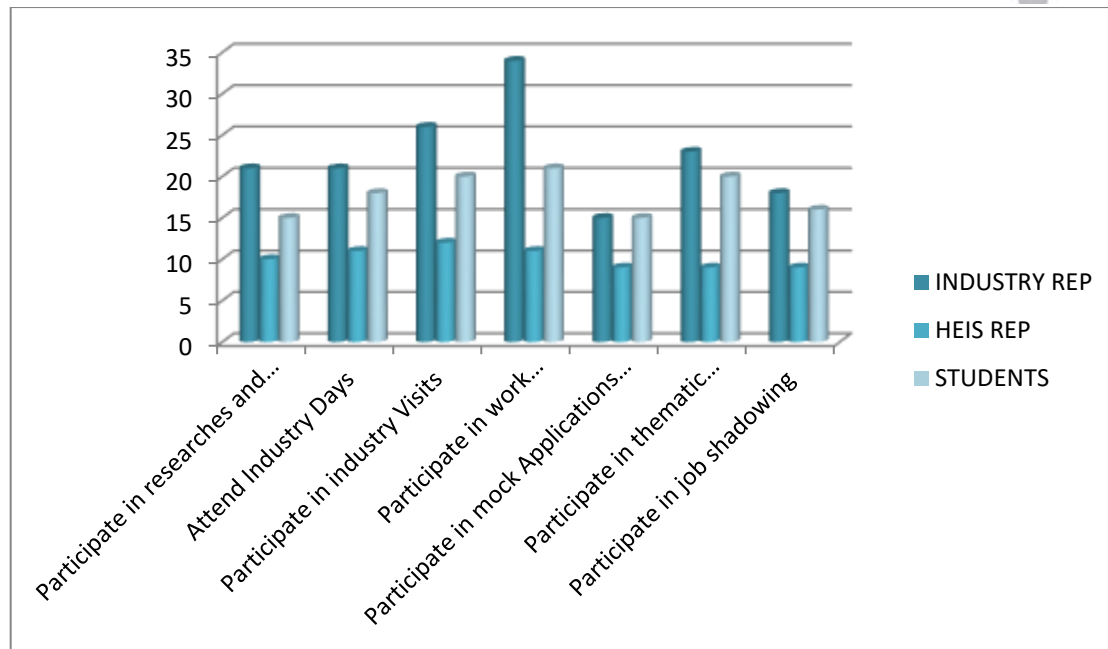
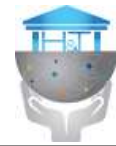


Figure 27: Possible contribution of students – CYPRUS

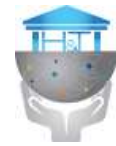
Finally, Cypriot students believe they can:

- ✓ Attend Industry Days
- ✓ Participate in industry Visits
- ✓ Participate in work experience/practical exercise programmes
- ✓ Participate in thematic workshops/seminars
- ✓ Participate in job shadowing

### Possible effective incentives

The consortium recognises that in order to establish a successful employer programme, the participation of as many stakeholders as possible is a key to success. Thus, we investigated possible incentives that could be provided to various stakeholders. It is noted that this question was emphasized during the interviews.

In Cyprus, seven respondents in the interviews said that employers will benefit since they will have the opportunity to hire trained, skilled, educated and qualified students that already know their work environment and satisfy their needs. One respondent said that the two main incentives are related to saving money and time, since the H&T industry will not have to look abroad for employees, nor will it have to spend time and money on training them. High-caliber local students employed in the industry will lead to more tourists coming to Cyprus, since they come here to be served by locals. One respondent said that no



incentive is required, since all parties will eventually benefit through participation. Some other gains mentioned by respondents include promotion and free advertisement of employers' businesses and the provision of talented employees in order to ameliorate the human resources of their organizations.

Respondents from the academia said that contact with employers will help them build professional relationships, meet new challenges, be provided with new views on industry trends and enrich their knowledge. Two respondents said that an incentive could be the offering of free accommodation in hotels, thus having the opportunity to encounter other academics from other institutions. This will lead to the updating of their knowledge and familiarisation with new trends and needs of the industry. This opportunity will enable academics to update their knowledge and skills of the professional environment and thus provide better education. Other respondents said that academics will have the joy of seeing their students grow in the industry. In this way academics will have achieved their goal of providing the required education ultimately resulting in attracting more students to their institutions. Another incentive will be the exchange of information between Mediterranean and European organisations that participate such as the comparison of industrial training and the sharing of innovative ideas between them (male, faculty). One respondent said that no incentive is needed since all parties will gain at the end through participation.

As far as students in Cyprus are concerned, six interviewees said that the most important incentive for students will be a secured future employment as well as personal development and growth through the gain of both hard and soft skills and further career development. Another respondent said that they will be able to explore industry requirements and evaluate them before applying for a position. One respondent said that no incentive is needed, since all parties will gain in the end through participation. Students will be able to build strong relationships with employers, build strong CVs and also get an education related to the H & T industry, thus helping them to find a job easier than other students.

It seems that, in the last few years the students do not understand or appreciate the importance of the practical experience. They need to be exposed to the actual environment of a hotel from the beginning so that they can decide if this is what they want for their career. We need to emphasize the advantages and not the disadvantages of the industry. They need to understand that if they are committed, they have a big chance to get promoted and start a career, as an informant stated.



In Greece, it emerged that incentives to employers could be:

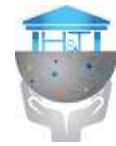
- the qualitative improvement of their customer service and the increase of their profitability, as well as the professional development of their personnel.
- the longer practical exercise of the students (that means lower staff cost but also better student training for a longer period), the well-trained staff which makes employers' firms more competitive, the participation of employers in projects that give them experience (e.g. travelling abroad for acquiring know-how).
- the advertisement for their companies (because of the internship programs or other linking activities with universities), and the new perspectives and ideas that students can give them as young and educated people.

Incentives to academics could be:

- the cover of the expenses for the hospitality of academics in H&T firms in order to examine each business from within, non - pecuniary rewards for the involved departments / universities (e.g. free meals or scholarships for students), financial benefits like project contracts and academic recognition.
- the economic benefits through the partnership, their further education and experience from the industry, their participation in the day to day monitoring of the students during their placement period, as well as their incentive to offer to their students updated and practical knowledge from H&T sector.
- the opportunity to examine H&T business from within through partnership, the better achievement of their courses' goals through practical examples and case studies from H&T firms, the chance for academics to combine theoretical and practical knowledge.

Incentives to students could be:

- better career prospects and better salary during internships, as well as their internal motives for further development of their skills.
- longer practical exercise period, which will help them to fit in the job and be more effective, the advanced knowledge for better training they have during internship, the recognition of internship as official employment and experience, the commitment of employers to hire a particular percentage of students as full time personnel after their graduation (following a placement evaluation).



- the better career prospects and financial profits, and the opportunity to realize how the real professional life is in H&T sector.

Lastly, in Finland, possible incentives to employers, according to the interviewees, include:

- Successful projects, good experiences, bachelor theses
- Financial benefit
- To design a programme together with industry.
- New professionals (workers) that you can get now or in the future.
- Practical, a down-to-earth approach to problem solving.

Possible incentives to academics, according to the interviewees, include:

- Developing the industry, intensive cooperation.
- That they get to know what the needs in H&T industry are. Possibility to get students who are motivated.
- More visibility to the H&T sector in general

Possible incentives to students, according to the interviewees, include:

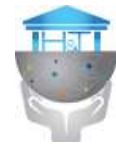
- The privilege to work with successful employers.
- Access to new skills and different challenges.
- Cooperation with H & T industry
- Employability
- Assignment of credits.
- Acquiring productive feedback is always
- The possibility to get a better salary, to get more experiences, possibilities to network

## **Critical success factors**

The success factors of the programme mentioned by the respondents in Cyprus were considered as critical success factors of a good partnership amongst all parties. Moreover, the simplicity of procedures was again mentioned and the necessity for proper management.

- Good organisation of all parties involved prior to launching the website





- Correct and frequent evaluation of the programme. All necessary changes and updates should be made and all key players should participate ensuring the success of the programme
- Government support in funding and marketing
- The programme should be steered by individuals with knowledge and experience in both the industry and educational institutions
- The programme should be simple and it should not have any cost both in reference to time or money
- Cooperation between the stakeholders and good planning in order to avoid mistakes and deliver the best results
- Leadership - Within all start-up enterprises there is a dominant leader who helps coordinate the enterprise and enables those involved to develop and function
- Knowledge and skills are required
- Genuine interest for the programme
- Communication between employer and educational institutions
- Qualified and professional staff
- Commitment by all stakeholders
- Tangible benefits for both the employer and the students equals success for institutes
- Willingness to co-operate and form partnerships. Considering the fact that the majority of stakeholders do not have a particularly strong culture and ethos of participation, future success of the programme rests on stakeholders' (and whoever is managing the programme) to co-operate with each other. This is going to be a major issue for the success of the partnership.
- Flexibility: partners in the programme would have to exhibit a greater degree of flexibility among themselves in order to ensure that all (or at least the majority of) priorities are being met within the project (i.e., the need for profitability for an employer, the need for academic integrity for faculty members, or the need for employability for students).
- Leadership: Those who would be occupied in the management of the partnership, would have to exhibit a great degree of leadership, in order to 'convince' the rest (other potential partners in the alliance) to join in and participate
- Strong planning: Apparently, in order for the programme to make a difference, it has to be managed by people with very good skills on planning and organisation of activities and events. The industry is so complex and heterogeneous that it would take people with special skills to organise everything and make a decent plan of how all this is going to operate and function.
- Common goals and objectives: finally, quite a few of the participants mentioned that promoting a common agenda (i.e., a set of common goals



and objectives) would be particularly critical since, this would ensure that all participants are motivated by a common set of rules and vision.

## Administrative and operational issues

In this question, we were expecting respondents to provide us with an answer regarding their understanding of a successful employer programme in terms of level of cooperation, i.e. whether they believe, they need and/or are keen on cooperating closely, partnering or cooperating on an activity rather than planning basis, in terms of sustainability, management etc.

The level of cooperation regarding planning and implementing, sustaining, coordinating, managing and evaluating an employer programme, is presented below for each country of the research:

How do you envision the planning and implementation of the employer programme? <sup>5</sup>	CYPRUS	GREECE	FINLAND
Partners offering different services to each other	20%	54%	49%
Partners exchange services and plan different activities together	45%	14%	18%
Partners plan and execute different activities together.	33%	33%	33%
How should a successful Employer Programme be sustained?	CYPRUS	GREECE	FINLAND
Donations from employers	36%	55%	22%
Donations from Tertiary Level Educational Institutions	35%	29%	20%
Regular funding from employers	39%	40%	36%
Regular funding from Tertiary Level Educational Institutions	39%	37%	49%
Self-sustainability via regular membership and/or participation fees	31%	47%	43%
Who should be responsible for coordinating an H&T Employer	CYPRUS	GREECE	FINLAND

<sup>5</sup> Note that the respondents in this question had the opportunity to choose more than one answers, thus the sum of the percentages is higher than 100



<b>Programme?</b>			
H&T Tertiary Level Educational Institutions	75%	81%	81%
H&T Students	25%	24%	36%
H&T Employers	44%	43%	59%
H&T Policy Makers	22%	24%	23%
<b>Who should be responsible for managing an H&amp;T Employer Programme?</b>	<b>CYPRUS</b>	<b>GREECE</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>
An advisory group with representatives from all stakeholders (one representative from each stakeholder) that will have a consulting role to the coordinator	43%	48%	50%
A steering committee with representatives from all stakeholders (one representative from each stakeholder) that will have a decision making /strategy setting role	47%	45%	37%
None is required. The Employer Programme should be managed by the coordinator. The other stakeholders will participate according to the guidance of the coordinator	46%	23%	23%
<b>What are, in your opinion, the best ways to achieve efficient communication and mutual understanding between the partners of an Employer Programme for the H&amp;T industry?</b>	<b>CYPRUS</b>	<b>GREECE</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>
Continuous communication through online tools	51%	60%	-
Meetings/fora held on specified time intervals where employers and representatives of H&T Tertiary Level Educational Institutions can meet and discuss their needs, insights and ideas	66%	74%	-
Organisation of Stakeholder Events on a frequent basis (e.g. open day events co-organised by employers)	41%	43%	-
Newsletters/email campaigns	30%	27%	-
<b>How do you think the Employer Programme could be evaluated?</b>	<b>CYPRUS</b>	<b>GREECE</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>
Integrated evaluation by all stakeholders of activities within an online system (e.g. online evaluation of curricula by all stakeholders, online evaluation of	50%	67%	58%



placement programmes by students, academic institutions and employers etc.)			
Evaluation of the activities by steering committee/coordinator by reference to results	46%	41%	44%
Manual evaluation of each activities by participants	40%	26%	32%
<b>How do you think the Employer Programme should be improved?</b>	<b>CYPRUS</b>	<b>GREECE</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>
Evaluation reports should be provided by the system and those should be reviewed by the body responsible for the management of the programme. Decisions to be implemented by the coordinator of the programme	48%	53%	40%
Regular implementation of research/surveys/focus groups in order to be constantly up to date with the ever changing needs of the industry	62%	59%	46%
Regular brainstorming sessions between the partners of the Programme	41%	44%	46%

*Table 13: Administrative and operational issues*

The elements included in table 13, are analysed separately below.

## **Planning and implementation of the employer programme**

Regarding planning and implementation of an employer programme, the responses by various stakeholders are shown in the figures below for each country and stakeholder category. It is noteworthy that the possible responses in this question were progressing from a basic cooperation (answer 1: “partners offering different services to each other”) to a full partnership (answer 3: “Partners plan **and** execute different activities together”).

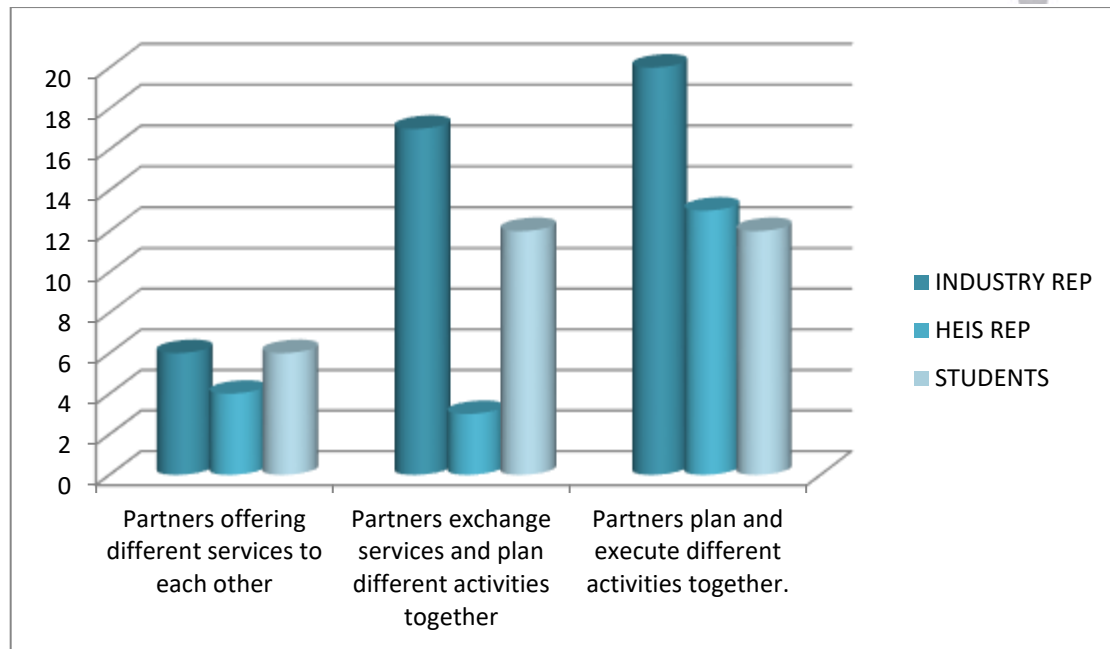
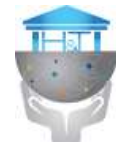


Figure 28: Planning and implementation of the employer programme – FINLAND

In Finland, all stakeholders seem to favor a full partnership between the H&T industry and H&T HEIs, as the most popular response for all stakeholder categories was the third one: “Partners plan and execute different activities together”.

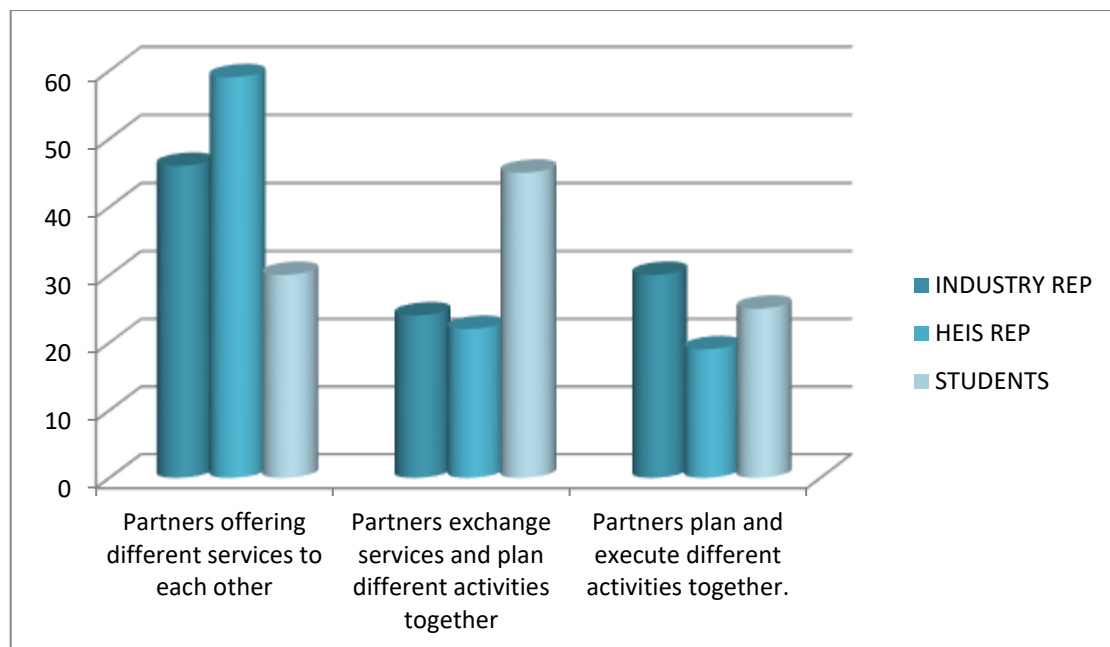


Figure 29: Planning and implementation of the employer programme – GREECE

In Greece, there seems to be a higher level of mistrust, rendering the work to be done by the EPHT consortium there more challenging. Among all participants, regardless of stakeholder type, the most popular response was the first one.

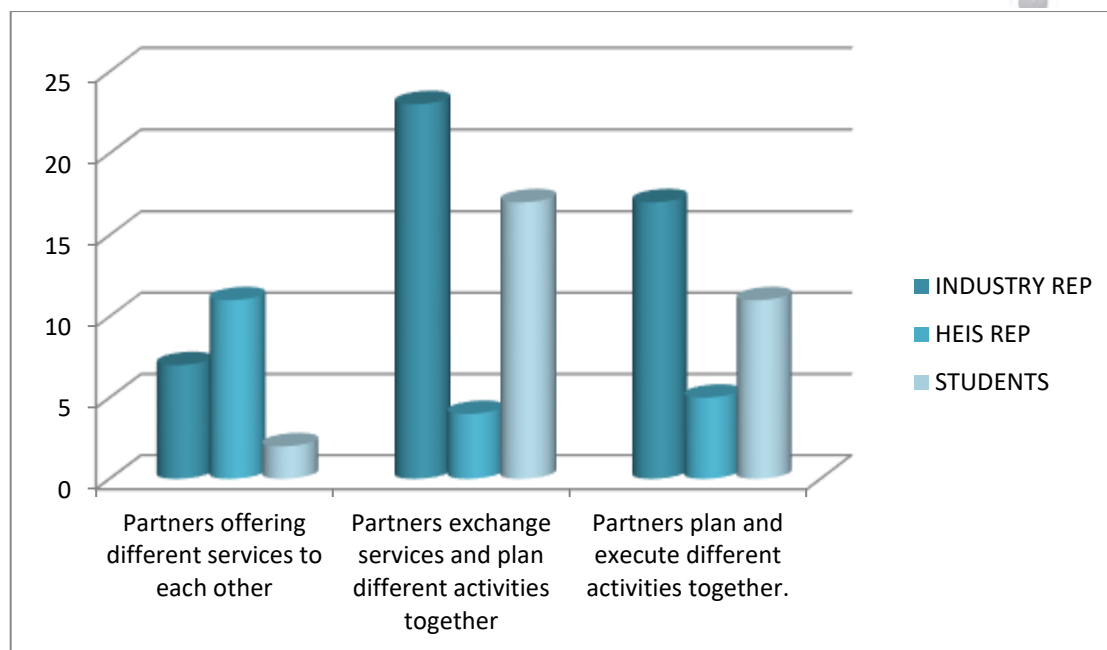


Figure 30: Planning and implementation of the employer programme – CYPRUS

Finally, in Cyprus, even though the majority of industry representatives and students responded that they would like a programme where “partners exchange services and plan different activities together”, academics and HEIs’ staff do not share this opinion, as their majority responded they want a programme where partners merely offer different services to each other.

### Sustainability

Regarding sustainability and funding of an employer programme, the responses by various stakeholders, are shown in the figures below for each country and stakeholder category:

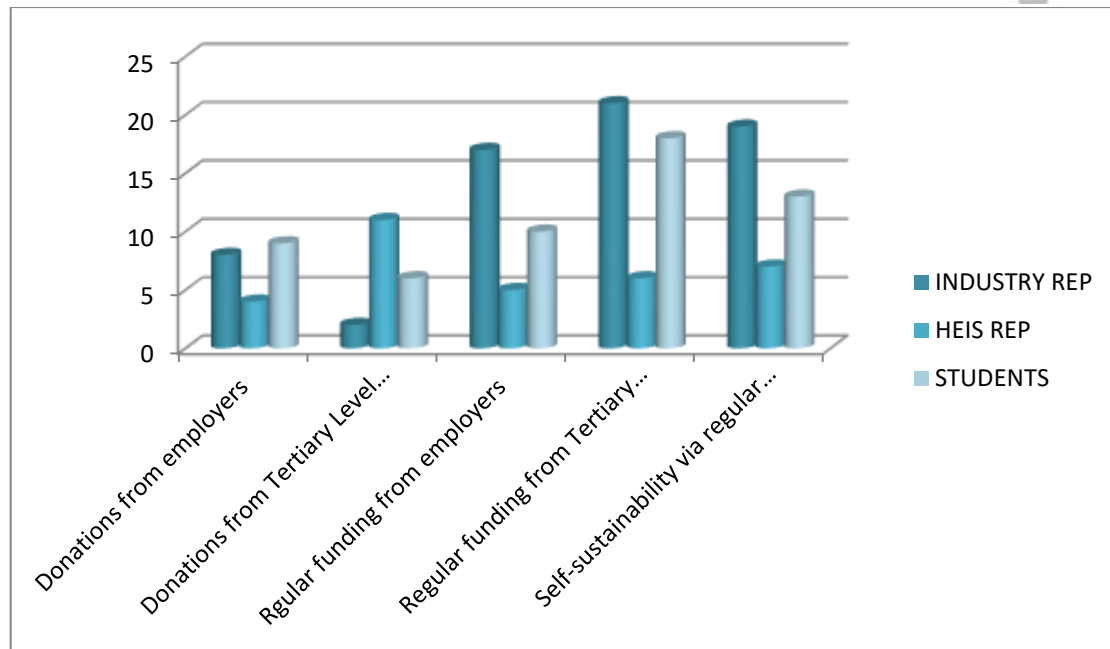
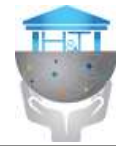


Figure 31: sustainability – FINLAND

In Finland, the most popular response for all stakeholders was that the employer programme should be sustained through regular funding by HEIs. Some academics (app. The same number) also believe that it could be self-sustained via membership and registration fees.

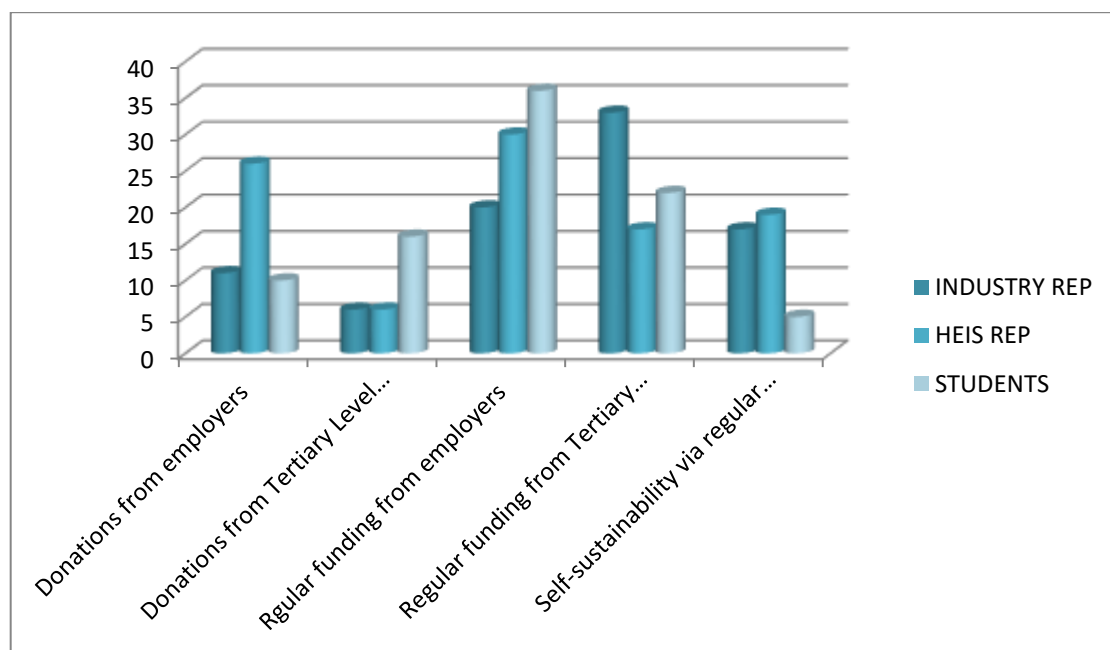
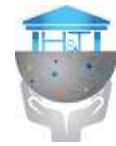


Figure 32: sustainability – GREECE



In Greece, the afore mentioned mistrust seems to be confirmed again, as industry representatives believe in majority that the programme should be funded by HEIs, while HEIs’ representatives, including students, believe in their majority it should be funded by employers.

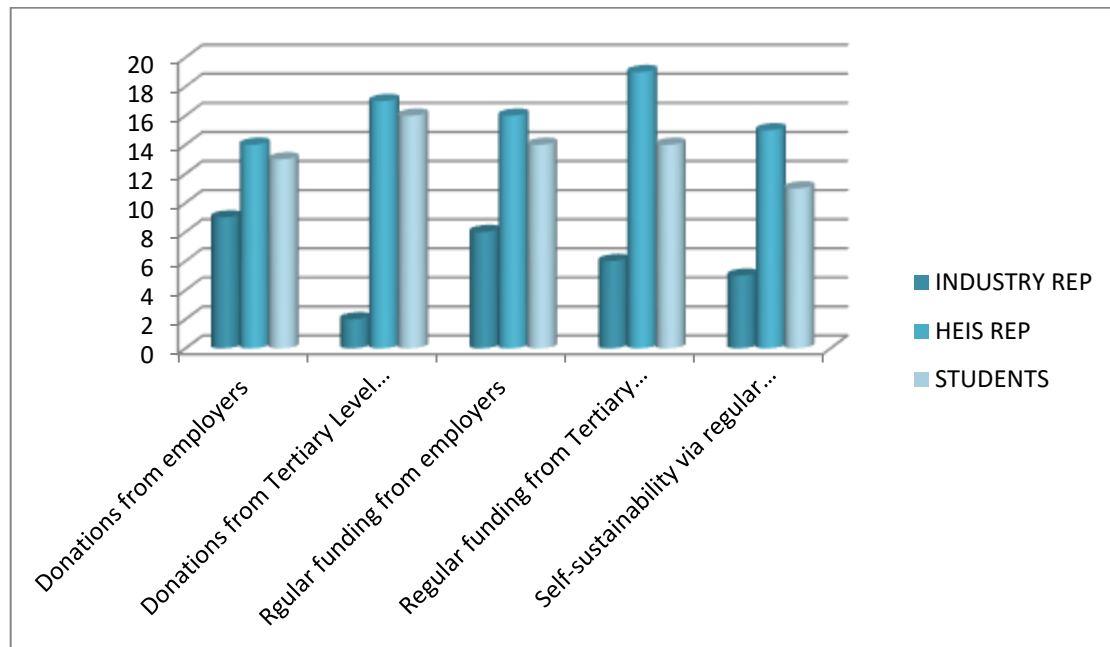


Figure 33: sustainability – CYPRUS

Finally, in Cyprus a more balanced picture emerged. The most popular response by employers, by a small margin though is “donations by employers”, while most academics believe that it should be funded through regular funding by the HEIS. Finally, the majority of students state donation from HEIs should be chosen.

## Coordination

Regarding coordination responsibility of an employer programme, the responses by various stakeholders, are shown in the figures below for each country and stakeholder category:



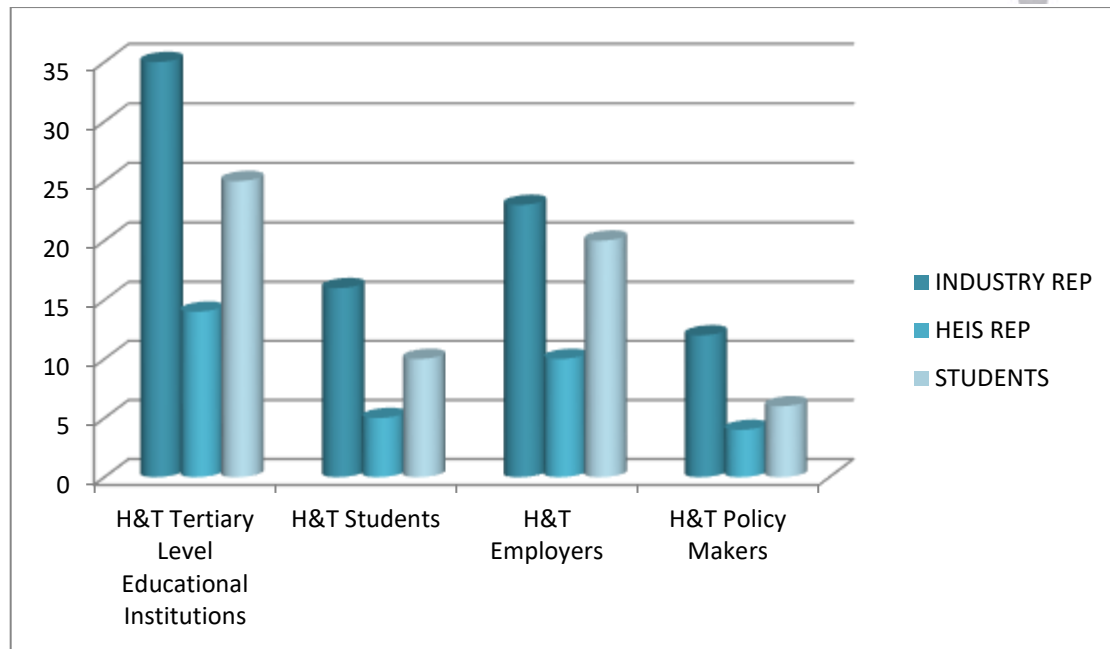
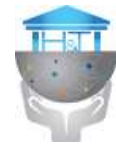


Figure 34: Coordination – FINLAND

A clear picture was acquired in Finland where all stakeholders would preferably trust coordination to the HEIs. Second most popular response were employers.

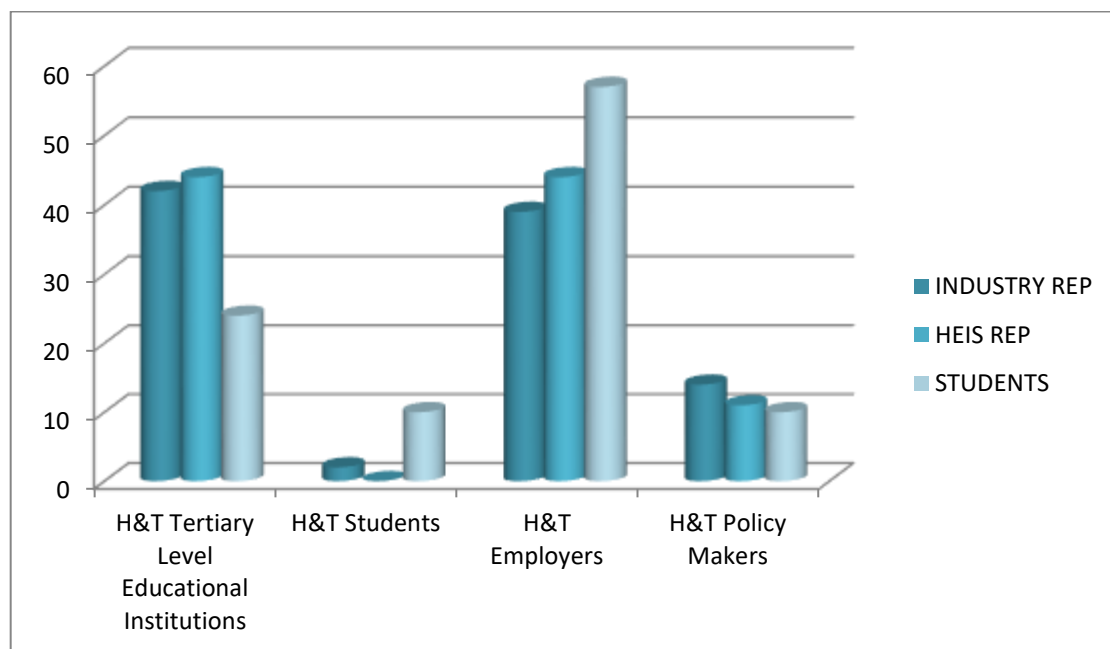


Figure 35: Coordination – GREECE

In Greece, employers were preferred, by a small margin though, followed by HEIs.

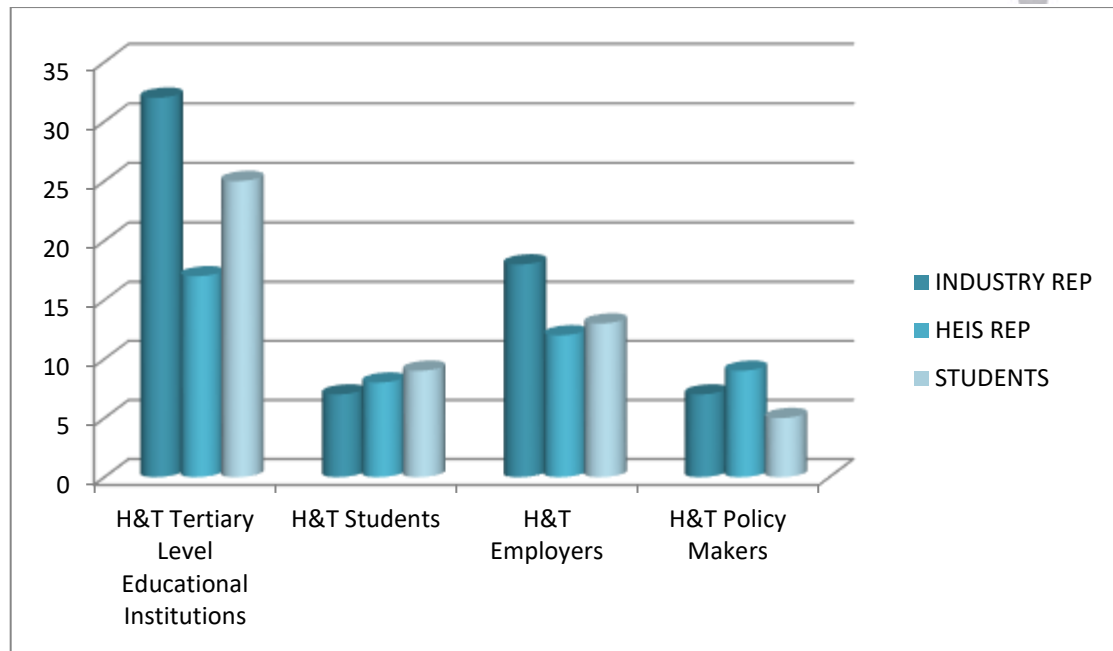
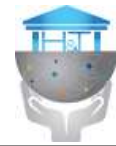


Figure 36: Coordination - CYPRUS

Finally, in Cyprus, as in Finland, HEIs are also trusted more by all stakeholders, followed by employers.

## Management

Concerning management of an employer programme, the responses by various stakeholders, are shown in the figures below for each country and stakeholder category:

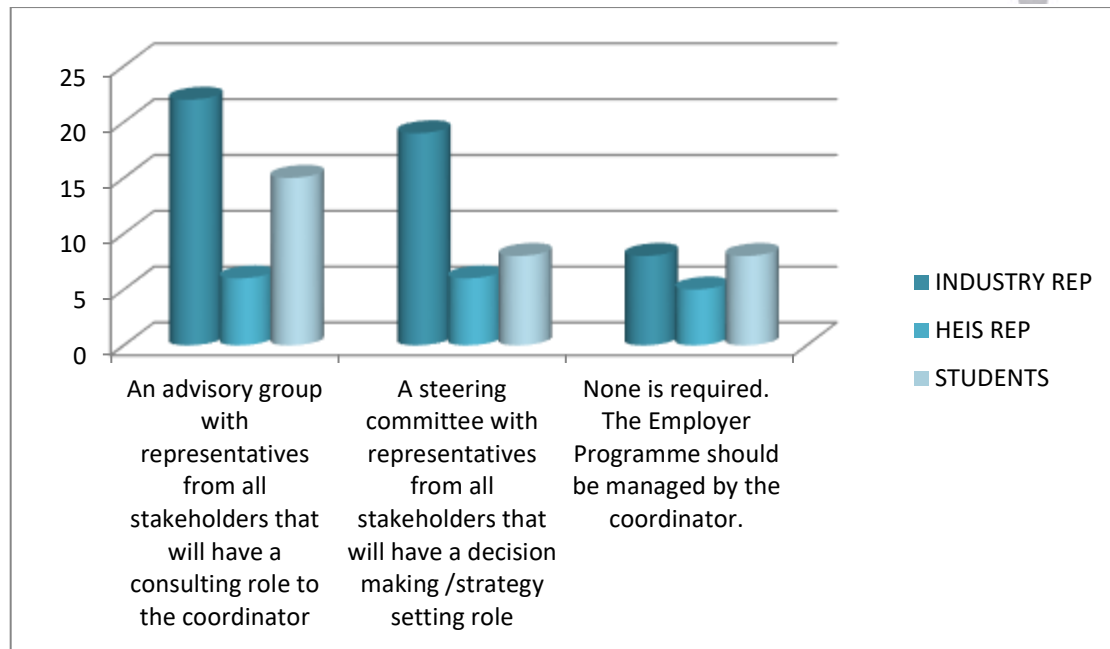
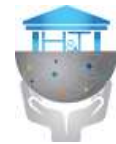


Figure 37: Management – FINLAND

In Finland, academics are equally spread across all possible responses. On the other hand, students and employers show a clear preference towards “an advisory group with representatives from all stakeholders that will have a consulting role to the coordinator”, in the role of whom, Finnish respondents prefer the HEIs, as shown earlier, in figure 34.

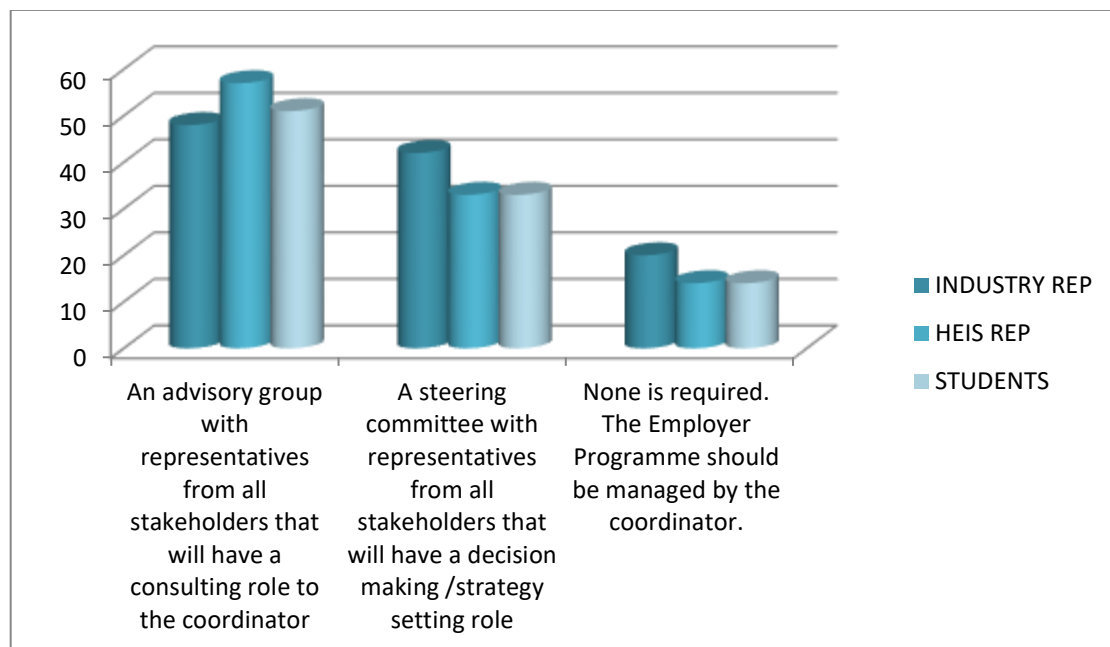
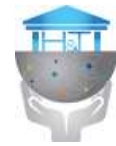


Figure 38: Management – GREECE



The same response prevailed also in Greece, for all stakeholder categories. It is worth to note here that the responses to this question are also progressive: The first represents a more horizontal, participatory approach, while the last one a vertical one.

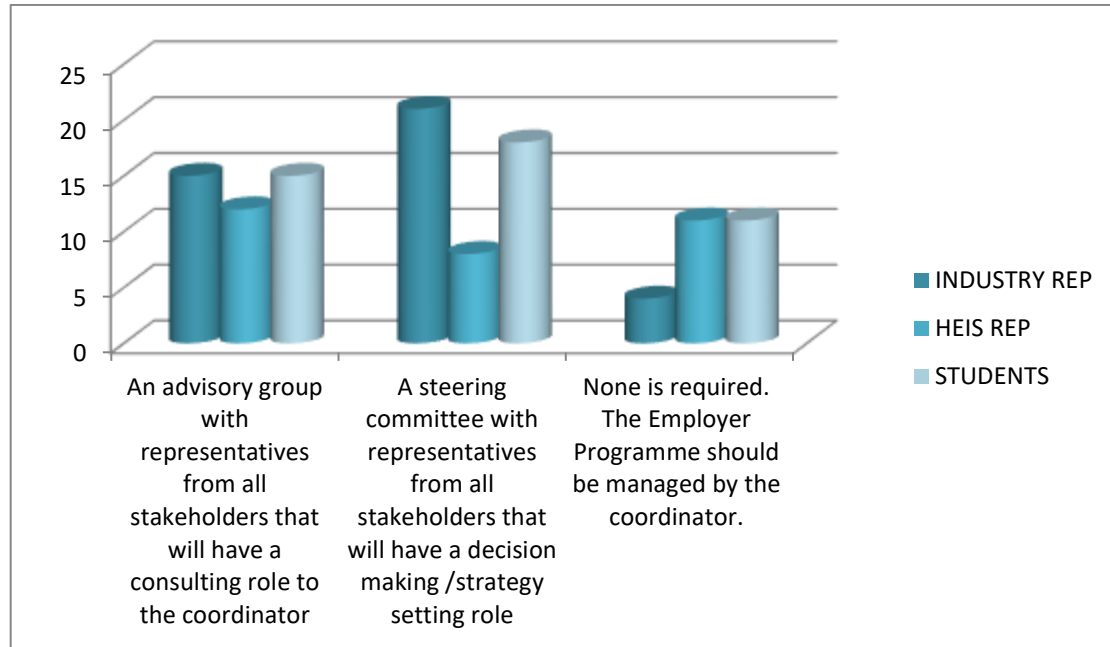


Figure 39: Management - CYPRUS

In Cyprus, even though the same response was the most popular among academics and HEIs’ staff, students and industry representatives had a different opinion. They believe that the management should be trusted on “a steering committee with representatives from all stakeholders that will have a decision making/strategy setting role”.

# Conclusions

The research indicates first and foremost the urgent need for an up to date, modern, efficient and effective employer programme in the sector of H&T.

The first important point highlighted by the graphs of each country, is that stakeholders do not seem to disagree greatly as far as their stances and attitudes towards the existing situation with regards to cooperation is concerned. In other words, representatives of the industry, HEIs and students are responding in a uniform manner. Some more conclusion from the responses of the participants, include:

1. There seems to be a need for further involvement of the industry in H&T education.
2. The comparison between the countries (as illustrated by the similar shapes of the charts) shows that needs, stances and attitudes may be combined in a common program, as there is no significant divergence between responses in Greece, Cyprus and Finland. It has to be noted though that it seems that in Finland, existing cooperation is more effective and wide than in Greece and Cyprus, and this is demonstrated by various results in various items in the questionnaire, as well as from the focus groups' and interviews' results.

In a comparative light, the situation in the three countries is not very different, which makes the design and application of a common employer programme in all these countries a feasible objective.

A detailed examination of the forms that existing cooperation undertakes was also included in the research, was implemented. The results can be summarised in the following points:

- ✓ In general, in all three countries, internships and practical exercise are the most common forms of cooperation between HEIs offering programmes in H&T and H&T enterprises.
- ✓ The fact that many relevant stakeholders who participated in the research, namely, representatives of the H&T industry, students and academics in H&T educational institutions are not aware of existing forms of cooperation, is a call for an employer programme that will be visible and will raise awareness among those stakeholders who will in turn be able to make the most of it.

- ✓ In all countries more “traditional” and tested through the years forms of collaboration are preferred. The most popular responses by a great margin were Internships and Practical Exercise.
- ✓ As we noticed often in the course of the research these two forms tend to be conflated and we concluded that essentially they might mean the same thing to our respondents and relevant stakeholders in general. Hence, in this case we can say that respondents recognise as the sole popular form of collaboration the practical exercise, which, as shown in the qualitative part of the research is mandatory, as a part of the curriculum in most HEIs offering H&T programmes.
- ✓ Concerning effectiveness of existing cooperation, it is interesting to note that academics and students were generally more critical of the current cooperation than industry representatives were. This can be explained through the fact that industry representatives usually are not as involved as HEIs are in such activities. The HEIs usually manage the activities and the role of the industry is passive, with the exception of Finland, where fora and focus groups are organised on a regular basis for the design of those activities. Additionally, this result nevertheless has to be assessed and evaluated with caution, as one of the limitations and consequent inherent bias of this research was the fact that it was designed and most importantly implemented by the HEIs. This might have caused inhibition to employers and their representatives, who could have been restricted while responding for the sake of courtesy.
- ✓ The largest number of all the respondents disagree that H&T educational institutions’ graduates are not well prepared for successfully joining the workforce, in other words, they believe that the graduates are well prepared for this.

Overall, in all three countries, there seems to be a lack of sufficient and effective communication, which hinders successful partnerships. This was made clear during the research and especially during its qualitative part (focus groups and interviews). Hence, possible ways of tackling this issue were explored.

The majority of industry representatives and students believe that the best way to achieve efficient communication and mutual understanding between partners of an employer programme is meetings/fora held on specific time intervals where employers and representatives of H&T tertiary level educational institutions can meet and discuss their needs, insights and ideas. In general, it was surprising that communication through online

tools was not a very popular response by any category of stakeholders in any country. This might be a result that can be traced to the need for face-to-face communication, which can help avoiding misunderstandings and different interpretations, while at the same time it may be traced in the mistrust towards online media.

An important aspect of the research concerned gains, incentives and contributions for, and by different stakeholders. This aimed at identifying what different stakeholders want to gain, what could motivate them and what they are eager to give to a successful employer programme.

The following table facilitates comparison between the countries. The most popular responses are listed in the first column and a ✓ in the corresponding column of each country demonstrates whether this response was among the most popular ones for the corresponding stakeholder type in the corresponding country. The responses that were popular in all countries are marked with a bright green colour, the ones that were popular in two countries with a lighter one and so forth:

<b>POSSIBLE GAINS FOR EMPLOYERS<sup>6</sup> (INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES' RESPONSES ONLY):</b>	<b>CYPRUS</b>	<b>GREECE</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>
Ready skilled workforce		✓	✓
Access to a skilled graduate workforce		✓	✓
Commercial advantage			
Status and reputation		✓	
Access to knowledge, facilities and services			✓
Training provision to employees by Tertiary Level Educational Institution staff (e.g. in marketing, management, etc.)	✓	✓	
Skilled interns	✓	✓	
Commissioned research (i.e. research on a specific topic and/or setting indicated by a business according to its needs)	✓	✓	
<b>POSSIBLE GAINS FOR ACADEMICS AND TERTIARY LEVEL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (ACADEMICS' AND TERTIARY LEVEL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS' RESPONSES ONLY):</b>	<b>CYPRUS</b>	<b>GREECE</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>
Possibility of developing an applied research	✓	✓	

<sup>6</sup> Note that the respondents in this question had the opportunity to choose more than one answers, thus the sum of the percentages is higher than 100

programme in the business			
Access to raw data provided by employers		✓	✓
Constant updating of the industry needs, which leads to more relevant teaching and research	✓	✓	✓
Current and relevant curricula	✓	✓	
Enhanced employability of graduates		✓	✓
Vocationally relevant curriculum			
Access to industry-standard resources			✓
<b>POSSIBLE GAINS FOR STUDENTS OF TERTIARY LEVEL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (STUDENTS' RESPONSES ONLY):</b>	<b>CYPRUS</b>	<b>GREECE</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>
Scholarships		✓	
Internships	✓	✓	✓
Networking			✓
Professional experience	✓		✓
Vocationally relevant curriculum		✓	
Access to industry-standard resources	✓	✓	
Opportunities for workplace and/or placement learning	✓		
Opportunity to develop workplace-relevant skills	✓		✓

Constant updating of the industry needs, which leads to more relevant teaching and research and Internships, were considered as possible gains in all three countries. In two countries, the common popular responses included:

- ✓ Ready skilled workforce (GR-FIN)
- ✓ Access to a skilled graduate workforce (GR-FIN)
- ✓ Training provision to employees by Tertiary Level Educational Institution staff (e.g. in marketing, management, etc.) (CY-GR)
- ✓ Skilled interns (CY-GR)
- ✓ Commissioned research (i.e. research on a specific topic and/or setting indicated by a business according to its needs) (CY-GR)
- ✓ Possibility of developing an applied research programme in the business (CY-GR)
- ✓ Access to raw data provided by employers (GR-FIN)
- ✓ Current and relevant curricula (CY-GR)
- ✓ Enhanced employability of graduates (GR-FIN)



- ✓ Professional experience (CY-FIN)
- ✓ Access to industry-standard resources (CY-GR)
- ✓ Opportunity to develop workplace-relevant skills (CY-FIN)

Concerning contributions that the different stakeholders are eager to make, once more the results presented focus on the most responses provided by each stakeholder category. Thus, in contributions by employers, only popular responses provided by employers are listed. This is because we believe that it is more important to know what the relevant stakeholders for each question believe that want to gain and what they are willing to give in a reciprocal, partner-based manner.

<b>CONTRIBUTION BY EMPLOYERS<sup>7</sup> (INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES' RESPONSES ONLY):</b>	<b>CYPRUS</b>	<b>GREECE</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>
Provide guest speakers from the industry	✓	✓	✓
Provide work experience/practical exercise programmes to students	✓	✓	✓
Organise student visits in the organisation	✓	✓	✓
Provide job shadowing opportunities for students	✓	✓	✓
Provide mentoring to students	✓	✓	✓
Participate in researches and surveys for the improvement of the curricula	✓		
Provide Enterprise Advisors	✓		
Provide temporary employment to students/graduates	✓		
<b>CONTRIBUTION BY ACADEMICS AND TERTIARY LEVEL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (ACADEMICS' AND TERTIARY LEVEL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS' RESPONSES ONLY):</b>	<b>CYPRUS</b>	<b>GREECE</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>
Organise Industry Days in the Institution	✓	✓	
Provide teacher placements in the industry		✓	✓
Facilitate/organise work experience/practical exercise programmes	✓	✓	✓
Organise thematic workshops/seminars		✓	✓
Organise and implement industry Visits	✓		✓
Design/implement/participate in researches and surveys for the improvement of the curricula	✓		

<sup>7</sup> Note that the respondents in this question had the opportunity to choose more than one answers, thus the sum of the percentages is higher than 100

Provide funding for the Employer Programme	✓		
<b>CONTRIBUTION BY STUDENTS OF TERTIARY LEVEL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (STUDENTS' RESPONSES ONLY):</b>	<b>CYPRUS</b>	<b>GREECE</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>
Participate in researches and surveys for the improvement of the curricula		✓	✓
Participate in industry Visits	✓		✓
Attend Industry Days	✓		
Participate in work experience/practical exercise programmes	✓		✓
Participate in thematic workshops/seminars	✓		✓
Participate in job shadowing	✓		
Participate in mock Applications & Interviews		✓	
Participate in job shadowing	✓		

Concerning administrative and operational issues, In Finland, all stakeholders seem to favor a full partnership between the H&T industry and H&T HEIs, as the most popular response for all stakeholder categories was the third one: “Partners plan and execute different activities together”, while in Greece, there seems to be a higher level of mistrust, rendering the work to be done by the EPHT consortium there more challenging. Among all participants, regardless of stakeholder type, the most popular response was the first one. Finally, in Cyprus, even though the majority of industry representatives and students responded that they would like a programme where “partners exchange services and plan different activities together”, academics and HEIs’ staff do not share this opinion, as their majority responded they want a programme where partners merely offer different services to each other.

In Finland, the most popular response for all stakeholders was that the employer programme should be sustained through regular funding by HEIs. Some academics (app. The same number) also believe that it could be self-sustained via membership and registration fees. In Greece, the afore mentioned mistrust seems to be confirmed again, as industry representatives believe in majority that the programme should be funded by HEIs, while HEIs’ representatives, including students, believe in their majority it should be funded by employers. Finally, in Cyprus a more balanced picture emerged. The most popular response by employers, by a small margin though is “donations by employers”, while most academics believe that it should be funded through regular funding by the HEIS. Finally, the majority of students state donation from HEIs should be chosen.

A clear picture was acquired in Finland where all stakeholders would preferably trust coordination to the HEIs. Second most popular response were employers. In Greece, employers were preferred, by a small margin though, followed by HEIs. Finally, in Cyprus, as in Finland, HEIs are also trusted more by all stakeholders, followed by employers.

In Finland, academics are equally spread across all possible responses. On the other hand, students and employers show a clear preference towards “an advisory group with representatives from all stakeholders that will have a consulting role to the coordinator”, in the role of whom, Finnish respondents prefer the HEIs. The same response prevailed also in Greece, for all stakeholder categories. It is worth to note here that the responses to this question are also progressive: The first represents a more horizontal, participatory approach, while the last one a vertical one. Finally, in Cyprus, even though the same response was the most popular among academics and HEIs’ staff, students and industry representatives had a different opinion. They believe that the management should be trusted on “a steering committee with representatives from all stakeholders that will have a decision making/strategy setting role”.



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